

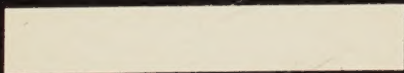






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THEODOSIA ERNEST.

VOLUME II:

OR.

Ten Days' Travel in Search of the Church.



PHILADELPHIA

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

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Introduction.

Our blessed Saviour, when he was upon the earth, knowing how very difficult it is to engage the attention and open the heart to the reception of religious truth, when presented abstractly, and in a didactic manner, was accustomed to connect his enunciation of the most important doctrines with a *narrative* suited to illustrate and enforce the teachings, while it gained the attention and secured the reception of his doctrine. We have every reason to believe that these narratives were most of them *fictional*. The persons introduced did not actually exist, and the incidents related had not really occurred. He was pleased to *invent* the narrative, to *suppose* the events to have happened, in order that he might by them illustrate and enforce the great lessons which he came to teach. We do not imagine that there was really "A certain rich man who had two sons," to whom it happened as he related in that most beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son. We do not suppose that he had in his mind any particular person whom he called the "Unjust judge, who feared not God nor regarded man," and yet was moved by the poor widow's "importunity" to do her justice. His hearers

understood perfectly well that these were *fictitious narratives*, employed to *gain attention* to a real truth. *Such fiction is no falsehood*. It is not intended to deceive, and it does not deceive. Its object is accomplished when it has won the attention to the *truth* of which it is made the vehicle.

What the prophets often did, and what Jesus habitually did, has been done by good men in every age. They have *invented narratives*, sometimes brief, and designed to enforce and illustrate a single thought, and sometimes continued and connected, in order to convey a system of doctrine or a series of truths. These are fables, or parables, poems or allegories, or simple stories, as may best suit the objects which the speaker or writer has in view. If Bunyan had merely told in plain, didactic language, the fears, the hindrances, the doubts, the sorrows, the hopes and labors and final triumphs of the Christian, he would have taught just what his Pilgrim's Progress was designed to teach; but he would not have taught it so effectually, nor indeed *so truthfully*, as he has done by means of his inimitable work of fiction, in which the truth is not only *told* to the ear, but *shown*, as it were, to the *eye* of the mind, acting itself out in its natural and necessary results.

The numerous writers who have labored so sedulously and so successfully to make religious truth attractive and familiar to the minds of children and young people, and whose works constitute the bulk of our Sunday-school libraries, have not neglected to employ the *narrative* as the *chief* means of gaining attention and reaching the heart. And just so far as such narratives are fitted and designed, *not merely to*

interest the reader, not merely to excite his sympathy or arouse his feelings, but to convey important information, to teach some practical lesson in morals or religion, to illustrate or enforce some great religious truth, so far they have the sanction of the example of the best of men in other days, and even of the Lord himself.

And what if it be true that wicked men have made fiction the instrument of most terrific evil? What if they have used it to pander to the vilest passions of depraved humanity? What if they have employed it as the vehicle of false philosophy and false religion? What if they have prostituted it to minister to a morbid and mawkish sensibility? What if they have flooded the land with the filthy outpourings of the vilest and most loathsome stews of profligacy and impiety? What if the infidel has seized on it and wielded it as his most powerful weapon against Christianity? Shall we leave it to the exclusive possession of the enemies of God and man? True, they have degraded and polluted it, but it is still a weapon of tremendous power. We will wrest it from their grasp. We will sanctify, by consecrating it to God and souls. We will increase its energies by earnest prayer for Heaven's blessing. And we will turn it against vice and infidelity. We will use it against error. We will make it the exponent and defender of the truth as it is in Jesus. Why should we not? Do we hesitate to make *poetry* the medium of truth, because the vicious and the dissolute have sometimes stolen her beautiful garments to cover up the most licentious conceptions of the veriest profligates that have ever been blessed with intellect? Do we cast aside our sacred songs because

the lyre has been degraded, and made to sing what modesty would not dare to speak in simple prose? No such thing. If others deface her beauty, misconceive her purpose, and misapply her power, we will weep over the perversion of so glorious a gift, but we will not refuse to employ the mighty energies of poetry and song in the soul-elevating work for which they were intended. Nor will we, for a similar cause, abandon to the vicious the exclusive use of the fictitious narrative. *We cannot conscientiously refuse to employ a weapon at once so effective and so necessary to the present condition of the reading world.*

In the first volume of Theodosia Ernest, we have endeavored to make it the medium of instruction to a class of minds which would, we thought, be more easily reached by this than any other means in regard to certain subjects which we consider as of vast importance to the true interests of the religion of Jesus. We intended, when we began that work, to condense into a single volume such arguments and facts as should appear to us essential to the right understanding of the main points of difference between the Baptists and other denominations of Christian people. But we found that we could not do justice to the argument, and bring it all into the compass of a single volume. We were therefore obliged, contrary to our wishes and our first intentions, to continue the discussion into the present volume.

In the first, we confined our investigations to those topics which are embraced in what is commonly called the "baptismal controversy," *to wit*, the *act* of baptism, the *subjects* of baptism, and *communion*. We did not say *all* we desired

to say, nor all that we intend to say, upon these subjects; but we have been assured, by those whose opinions we value more than our own, that on each of these points the argument is satisfactory and *unanswerable*. If there is in the manner of presenting it any thing *unkind or disrespectful* to those who have conscientiously come to different conclusions from the author and his brethren, we sincerely regret it. We would not willingly grieve any lover of our Saviour, or cause the weakest of his little ones to stumble. If we are not self-deceived, we seek to know, and do, and teach the simple truth as we find it recorded in the Sacred Word; and to do this kindly and tenderly, but yet as one who feels that he must give account if he should "handle the Word of God deceitfully."

In this volume we have presented the subject of *Church polity*. We are sure that Baptists themselves (we mean the masses, and not the educated few) have very much to learn in regard to the true nature and constitution of a scriptural Church of Jesus Christ. This has been less frequently than baptism the topic of pulpit instruction or newspaper discussion. What has been written upon it has, until recently, been mostly inaccessible to the common people; and much of it, we humbly conceive, has not been suited to give them *entirely* correct impressions even if they had seen it. We hail, however, with great pleasure, the recent appearance of several most valuable works upon this subject; and if we chance in some things to differ from the authors of these works, or others who have attempted to develop the true idea of the Church of Christ, we trust that our teachings will be

tried, *not* by the common opinion of modern Christians, or ancient Christians, *not* by the theories or the practice of Pedobaptists, or of Baptists, but simply and solely by the Word of God. To this the author has endeavored to bring every position, and examine it carefully by its sacred light. To this he appeals. By this, and this alone, will he be judged.

NASHVILLE, July 22d, 185

Ten Days' Travel

IN SEARCH OF THE CHURCH

FIRST DAY'S TRAVEL.

The converted infidel—The authority of the Scriptures—The object of our investigation—Is the Church one or many?—Has the Church any branches?—Difficulties increasing—A mystery developed.

IN the ladies' cabin of one of those magnificent steamboats which ply upon the Mississippi, was a mixed company, consisting of persons brought together from various portions of our own and other lands. Some lounged lazily on the rich sofas; some walked uneasily up and down the room; some talked apart, in groups of two or three; some read the morning papers, which the obliging clerk had obtained at the last landing; others were intent upon the "latest novel," or other trashy literature, which may always be procured about the wharf from which a boat is starting. Every thing readable had been seized upon by some one of the passengers, to while away the tedium of the monotonous voyage, with one exception. THE LARGE BIBLE, which some generous-hearted people had presented to the boat, lay unopened upon the centre-table. Seeing this, a gentleman who had been walking up and down in the dining-saloon, came in through the open door, sat down

by the table, opened the book with an air of unconcealed reverence, and silently read several chapters in succession.

There was something in the appearance and the manners of the man that attracted the special attention of a lady remarkable for the tasteful neatness of her plain apparel, and the extraordinary beauty and expressiveness of her face, who was sitting on the left of the table, engaged in conversation with a matronly personage, who, with quite a patronizing air, was expounding to the newly married pastor's wife the mystery of making a certain variety of bread.

The Bible reader had, on sitting down, taken his pencil from his pocket, as though it had been his habit to read with it in his hand; and once he had placed it on the margin of the page, seemingly with the design to make some mark, or note, when, recollecting that it was not *his own* Bible, he laid it aside. When he had done reading, however, he turned to the fly-leaf opposite the title-page, and wrote slowly and carefully these lines:

The Book of God! let man beware,
And note the words with earnest care;
Heedful to learn what God will say,
And not to cavil, but obey.

After which, he reverently closed the book, and returned to the other cabin. As soon as he was gone, the young lady reached the Bible, and, with true womanly curiosity, hastened to examine the writing. When she had read it, she found her husband, (a noble-looking man in the early prime of life, dressed, like herself, with great simplicity, yet with most perfect taste,) and brought him to look at it; remarking, as he was reading it, "That man is a Christian, my dear, and, it may be, a minister. We must become acquainted with him.

"That is not unlikely. Show me which he is, and I will get the captain to introduce me to him."

She pointed him out, and her husband went to seek the wished-for introduction.

"Captain, do you know that tall, dark gentleman yonder?"

"Certainly, sir. That is Dr. Thinkwell, formerly a practitioner of medicine, but now a wealthy planter. His summer residence is not many miles from Nashville. He will make the whole trip with us."

"Will you have the kindness to make me acquainted with him?"

"Certainly; but you may not find his company so pleasant as you think; though, for that matter, he is a perfect gentleman. But you know you clergymen have your own opinions about some things; and the Doctor is said by some to have very different ones. In fact," and the captain dropped his voice to a whisper, "he is said to be a Universalist, or an infidel, or something of that sort—I don't know exactly what."

"I am all the more anxious to know him, then."

"Well, I only thought best to put you on your guard. He is coming this way: I will introduce you now.—Dr. Thinkwell, let me make you acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Percy, a young clergyman, who, with his lady, will travel with us as far as Nashville."

"I am most happy to meet with you, Mr. Percy. There are but few of our present company who will make the whole trip, and I shall enjoy the voyage more for having some acquaintance in the ladies' cabin."

"Come with me, then, and let me introduce you to Mrs. Percy."

They walked to the other apartment, and Mr. Percy introduced him to the lady as Dr. Thinkwell; and, to correct her conjecture that he might be a clergyman, added that he believed he was *not* a doctor of divinity, but of medicine.

"I had fancied, sir," said she, "that you must be a minister of the gospel."

"Why did you think so, Mrs. Percy?"

"From the reverent manner of your reading that book, and the lines you left upon the blank leaf at its beginning."

"I have good reason, Madam, to love and reverence that book, although I am entirely unfit to become the expounder of its glorious truths. It is true I once despised it. I will not say I hated it: I scarcely thought it worthy of more than quiet contempt. Now I feel that it deserves far more grateful consideration at the hand of all men than it is accustomed to receive even from Christians. I cannot open it but with a sense of amazement at the goodness and the wisdom of the God who gave it."

"Then you were once an infidel?"

"If by an infidel, Madam, you mean one who does not believe that the book called the Bible was a revelation from the Deity, I was an infidel. But I was also more."

"Surely you were not an atheist! I have been accustomed to think that no person of ordinary intelligence and a *sane* mind *could* be an atheist."

"If by an atheist you mean one who is fully satisfied that there is no God, I was not one. But if you mean one who very seriously *doubts* the being of a God; one who believes that there is not in nature, so far as known to us, sufficient and satisfactory proof to show that there is a God; then I was an atheist. He must be a bold man, indeed, who would undertake to say that there is certainly *not* a God; for although there might be no evidence of God within his sphere of observation; nothing within him, nothing around him, nothing in the earth beneath or in the sky above him to show that God exists, he could not determine that there *might not be such evidence somewhere else*. Unless he had ranged through all the immensity of the universe, and perfectly mastered all the facts which it presents, that one world where he had not been *might be* the very world where God might be distinctly known;

or that one fact which he did not know might be the very fact which, if known, would prove the existence of a God. If any man be mad enough to take such ground, you may well call him a fool. He has said in his heart not merely that there is not evidence enough to prove that God is—so leaving his existence in doubt—but plainly and positively that there is no God. Such a man is not properly an atheist, but an anti-theist—not only *without* God, but *against* God. I was an atheist, but not an anti-theist.”

“Pray, Doctor, sit down and tell us, (that is, if you have no objection to speak of these things,) how it was that you were brought out of this darkness of unbelief into the light of faith.”

“When I was an unbeliever, I did not hesitate to express my doubts, and the reasons why I doubted. I took pleasure in encountering in argument those who were silly enough, as I then considered them, to believe such incredible things as the doctrines of the Christian religion; and why should I now hesitate to avow my faith in God and in his word, and, more than all, in Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour? I will take pleasure, therefore, in relating to you the process of reasoning by which I have been led to the reception of the truth. But the story is a long one: the arguments are various, and may, to you, seem complicated, and will require our careful and undivided attention. This we can hardly give during our stay upon the boat; but I trust there will be some favorable opportunity before we part.* Meantime, let me have some conversation with you upon another subject, in regard to which you are probably better informed than I am, and

* If my reader desires to see the argument on this subject, he can find it in a delightful work recently published, styled “The Infidel’s Daughter.”

about which I am just now in a state of distressing uncertainty.

“It is not very long since I was led, in God’s great mercy to take Jesus Christ for my Saviour. In doing so, I took him for my Lord and King. I feel that to him alone I owe allegiance in all matters of religion ; and, if I am not self-deceived. I sincerely desire and intend to know and do his will. I am aware that he requires of those who believe in him, that they shall make a public profession of their faith in him, and unite themselves with his visible people. This I should have done ere now, but for a single difficulty, which is not yet removed, and in the removal of which you possibly may aid me.”

“And what is that great difficulty?”

“Simply this : there are so many different organizations, each claiming to be the Church of Christ, that I do not know which to receive and unite with as his.”

“Permit me to suggest,” replied Mr. Percy, “that you have probably not made a careful examination of the subject in the light of the *Scriptures alone* ; but have permitted the cross-lights of tradition and of prejudice, or at least of early impressions, to confuse your vision, and so divert your attention from the real object of your search ; for, had this not been the case, I do not understand how you could find reason for even a moment’s hesitation.”

“Do you think, then, that the peculiar characteristics of The Visible Church of Christ are so plainly and definitely set forth in the Scriptures, that it is not easy to mistake on this point ?”

“Surely they are, my dear sir ; so that it is not only easy not to mistake, but, I had almost said, *so that no man of common sense, who will be guided by Scripture alone, casting aside the influence of all human teachings, can possibly mistake* Why, sir, after the revelation of Christ himself, he

great object of the New Testament Scriptures—the very purpose for which they were intended—is, to give the constitution, the laws, and the history of the kingdom which Christ came to establish upon the earth; and it would be strange, indeed, if they have given them in language so ambiguous that no one could understand it, or that any candid inquirer should have any sort of difficulty in knowing what this kingdom in its essential features is.”

“How, then, does it happen, sir, that there exists such a wide diversity of opinion among the good and pious? If the thing is so plainly set forth, why do not all see it, and see it all alike? How is it that we have Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, and Lutherans, and Congregationalists, and Methodists, and I can’t say how many others, all claiming, each for themselves, that they are the true Church of Christ?”

“Excuse me, gentlemen,” said a middle-aged man, who looked up suddenly from the newspaper which he had apparently been reading; “I do not conceive of these various Churches that each claims for itself that it is *the Church*, but only that it is a *branch of the Church of Christ*. I am a minister of the Methodist Connection, and I am sure that, while we claim for ourselves to be a part of the Church of Christ, we do not deny that Episcopalians, provided they are good and pious, and Presbyterians, and Lutherans, and Baptists, and, in fact, all evangelical Christians, are just as much branches of Christ’s Church as we are ourselves.”

“You would remove my difficulty, then,” replied the Doctor, “by showing that it is a matter of no consequence at all with which of these various organizations I shall unite, since all are equally Churches of Christ, and I would obey him equally whether I attach myself to one or to another. Do I understand you rightly?”

“O, of course I think my own denomination more nearly right than any other, or I would not belong to it; and if I

should give you any advice, I would say, sir, by all means unite with the Methodists. But still, we hold that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, and that every Christian, therefore, should belong to that connection where he can best enjoy himself."

"Your suggestion, then, does not quite meet my case. I am not seeking to secure *my own enjoyment*, but to obey *Christ's requirements*. I am willing to deny myself to do his will. I only ask to know which (if any) of these various organizations was that which he established, and into which, therefore, he requires me to be incorporated. They are certainly very different in doctrine, different in practice, and different in the character of their membership. They cannot *all* be right. They cannot be each the Church of Christ, unless Christ established several distinct Churches. They cannot be *branches* of his Church, unless he established a Church with several different branches. This is self-evident. But if he did, there is, of course, some record of it in this book;" (laying his hand reverently on the Bible;) "and if you will do me the kindness to point it out, I shall certainly avail myself of your suggestion, and unite with that body in which I think I will best enjoy my religion."

Saying this, he pushed the Bible across the table, so that it lay directly before the stranger, who mechanically opened it, but without looking into it, as he replied, "You would not, of course, expect to find the Methodist, or Episcopal, or Lutheran, or Presbyterian Churches described by name in the Word of God, for none of them existed, or were known by name, in the days when the Scriptures were written; but we hold that it is all-sufficient, *if the essential doctrines and practices of each or any of them can be established by Scripture proof*. If the doctrine and practice of any of them, or all of them, are scriptural, then they are scriptural Churches."

"But do you not see, my dear sir, that while they differ in

doctrine and practice, they *cannot* be *all* scriptural, unless the Scriptures teach as many different and opposing systems of doctrine and practice as there are Churches. If any one of them is in accordance with Scripture, it follows, of necessity, that just so far as the others differ from *it*, they differ from the Scripture. There *can* be only one scriptural Church of Christ, unless Christ founded more than one, and gave them different laws. This, I am sure, needs no proof: it is self-evident. And what I ask, and must require, before I can avail myself of your kind suggestion, that I may unite with any one of these organizations, and feel that I am obeying him, is, that you show me some shadow of proof, some faint intimation at least, that his Church was *not* one and undivided, but that he gave different constitutions, laws, and doctrines to different classes of people, or, at least, that he authorized the *one* Church to divide itself into what you call branches. So far as my investigations have gone, I find his kingdom spoken of as an undivided kingdom. His people are said to be *one*. There is one fold and one shepherd: there were to be no divisions among them. They were all to speak the same thing. We read, indeed, of different individual Churches, as the Church of the Corinthians, and of the Church of Ephesus, and the like—separate, and distinct, and independent organizations—but they were one in doctrine, one in practice. They all walked, or were required ‘to walk, by the same rule.’ They had all ‘one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism.’ It is thus that I read; but if I read amiss, I will be thankful to him who will show me my error. You say, sir, that these modern sects are *branches* of the Church: if so, where or which is the main and parent stock planted by Christ and cultivated by the apostles, from which these branches grow? If that is still alive, I will be engrafted into it. If *it* is dead, what keeps alive the branches? If the original stock is so cut up into branches that it cannot be found, show me some scrip-

tural authority for the cutting up, and some command requiring me to add my name to any of them as I may think most proper. I read, indeed, of Christ as the vine, and of *individual Christians* as branches growing out of him, and living by his life; but nowhere of a parent stock of *churches*, with branches growing out of *it*. Can you point me to any such a passage?"

"Indeed, sir," replied the preacher, "I do not deny, and I suppose that no one can deny, that there ought to be general unity among Christians, and that the divisions and dissensions which have separated the professed followers of Christ are greatly to be deplored; but, at the same time, sir, human nature is imperfect: men will not all see alike, and hence there always have been, and always will be, differences of opinion, and, consequently, of practice."

"Very true, my dear sir, but this does not affect the point about which we are conversing in the slightest degree. The question which I ask is this: What or which is that organization which was established by Christ, and called his Church or kingdom? I feel that it is my duty to join myself to it. You reply that human nature is imperfect, and men will differ from each other, so that some think this and some think that is it. One says, here, in the Roman Catholic hierarchy; another says, there, in the Episcopal; another, in the Lutheran; another, in the Presbyterian; and so on, through the catalogue. You have your private opinion that it is in the Methodist Connection, but assure me that *any* of them will do. Now, to me it seems evident that, although human nature is imperfect, God's *revelation* cannot be. In that revelation (it is admitted by all) is revealed and described a visible organization, which was devised and established by Jesus Christ, and is called his Church. Whatever that may be, it is some *one* thing, and not a dozen different things; for a kingdom divided against itself, said Jesus, cannot stand. It is, what

it is there represented to be, just that, and nothing else. It must be still in existence, because he foretold that it should never fail; that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Now, my object is to find it; and, having found it, to become a part of it."

"I do not conceive, sir," said Mr. Percy, "that you will meet with any serious difficulty in making the discovery, when you once begin at the *right place* and look in the *right direction*."

"I must have started wrong then, for, up to this time, I confess there is an impenetrable obscurity hangs over the whole subject."

"Will you permit me to ask," said Mrs. Percy, "of what denomination were your parents?"

"They belonged to the Church of England, madam."

"Then you were sprinkled in your infancy."

"So I have been told. And I remember that, when I was about twelve years old, the bishop put his hands upon my head, and said some words, which they informed me confirmed my baptism, and completed the process of making me a Christian."

"Then," said she, "you have some predilections for the organization which you were taught in childhood to regard as the only Church of Christ."

"It may be so, madam; but I do not think you apprehend the exact nature and extent of the difficulties which embarrass and distress me. My mother was a good and pious Christian. In most things she was right; and I grant that I cannot help feeling a smothered conviction that she *must* have been right in whatever pertained to her religion. But, at the same time, I am quite ready, upon sufficient evidence, to admit that she was wrong. My parents did not make religion the special study of their lives. They received *their* religious opinions from others, in their childhood, as *I did mine*, so

far as I had any, until recently; they never made them the object of any careful examination, but took it for granted that what 'the Church' believed must be the truth. So, if what is called the Church was wrong, they were wrong, of course. But here is the trouble: *I* have not made religion the study of *my* life any more than *they* did; *my* judgment, therefore, is worth no more than *theirs*. And when I turn to those who *have* given the labor of their lives to this very thing, I find that they have come to such various and contradictory conclusions, that I am ready to despair of the possibility of ever knowing certainly what is the truth.

"I fix my attention upon one man. I see that he has an intellect superior to my own; that he has piety which I never expect to equal; that he has stores of learning such as I never can obtain. He is honest; he is earnest; he is studious and prayerful. He has spent a long life in the almost exclusive study of this very subject, and he is a Presbyterian. I turn to another, and he is a Methodist; to another of the same class, and he is a Lutheran, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or possibly, like Fénelon, a Catholic.

"Now, what am I to do? How can I decide who of them all is right? How venture in my ignorance to determine what all the wisdom of pious sages leaves open to dispute?"

"That is just what I said," replied the Methodist. "The whole matter is involved in so much uncertainty, and each of the Churches can present so many good and valid reasons in its favor, that every one must consult his own inclinations, and join that which is most congenial to his feelings."

"I cannot think so, sir," resumed the Doctor; "for when, on the other hand, I turn my attention to God, instead of man—when I look into the Holy Word, I find a *positive duty* is *imperatively enjoined*. This duty—that of uniting with the Church of God by a public profession of faith in Christ—poses a previous decision of the question, who and what

that Church is And the Scriptures *must*, therefore, (if I only knew how to find it,) contain such a specific description of the nature and peculiar characteristics of that Church as to enable me to decide which it is for myself, and that without any danger of mistake. Still, I confess that I have not yet found any such description in the book, or, if I have, I have not yet found the corresponding organization in this country."

"If you will pardon me for saying so, Doctor," replied Mr Percy, "I think I can easily convince you that your difficulties are much more fanciful than real; or rather that they are much more theoretical than practical. The simple truth is this: You have nothing to do with other men's decisions. It is nothing at all to you or to me what this good man or that great man may think. Religion is a *personal* matter; its faith is *personal* faith; its duties are *personal* duties. It rests upon a *personal* recognition of the teachings of God's Word. You are personally responsible to God for your own individual faith and practice. You must therefore examine for *yourself*, and not leave others to decide these questions for you.

"You may investigate the subject just as though no one else had ever thought of it. You should regard no other man's decision as of authority to you. You do not hesitate to treat a case of fever, because Hippocrates and Galen, Boerhave or Sydenham, Cullen or Bronsais, chanced to disagree either in theory or practice?"

"No, sir. I examine for myself, decide for myself, and act upon my own decision. If I should wait for the doctors to agree, I should never make a prescription."

"Just so let it be in regard to this matter. I discover that you are in earnest. You desire to know the truth. You recognize God's Word as the only standard of truth. **By that, and that alone, we are to try our faith and practice**

You have truly stated that this word teaches that the visible kingdom of Christ is not many, but one; and it must be *now* just what it *was* in the apostles' days: I have my own opinion upon this question, but I will not intrude it upon you as an argument. If you will consent, we will together, during our voyage, make a careful, thorough, and systematic examination of the *Scriptures* in regard to their teachings on this subject. And when we have finished, if you have any shadow of a doubt remaining, it will be more than I expect. My friend, Mr. Courtney, who will join us at our next landing, has given more attention to these subjects than I have, and will doubtless take pleasure in giving us his assistance, as will also, I trust, our Methodist friend."

"Please then," said Mrs. Percy, "postpone this matter till to-morrow, and, for our mutual advantage, make the investigation so thorough and extensive as to leave no room for doubt in any mind."

"But, madam, you do not reflect that this would require all the leisure which we will have during the next two weeks."

"Suppose it should: it will be time well spent. But we shall get on faster than you imagine. Mr. Courtney is a sort of walking-library upon these subjects, and Mr. Percy has had some personal experience in such investigations."

"Very good," replied the Doctor; "we will at least do what we can towards a complete examination of the whole subject, and should we not finish it during our voyage, you and Mr. Percy will, I trust, do me the favor to continue it at my house, after our arrival in Nashville; for you are then to be my guests. Nay! no excuses. I have claims upon you both, of which you are yet quite ignorant; and, in due time, I am very anxious to learn how and when you chanced to become Mrs. Percy; for when I saw you last, you were Miss Theodosia Ernest; and how and when Mr. Percy became a minister of

the gospel ; for when I last saw him, he was regarded only as a very promising young lawyer."

"Then, sir, you are not the utter stranger that we supposed you to be!"

"So far from it, madam, I am, in one sense, indebted to you, under God, for the greatest blessing of my life."

"Indeed, sir, this is all a mystery to me. I am not aware that I ever saw you before to-day."

"That may well be ; yet I have seen you very frequently. Some other time I will explain : I have now been shut up here so long, that I must take a turn on deck, and get some fresh air."

SECOND DAY'S TRAVEL.

In which little more is done than to settle the exact meaning of the words and phrases used in the Scriptures to designate the new institution which was established by Christ, and which people commonly call his Church, but which the Scriptures call his kingdom.

IF the reader has never seen the work to which this is the sequel,* he will do well to lay this down until he can obtain and read Theodosia Ernest, for there is much in this which no one can fully understand without some acquaintance with the history which that book records. If he has seen and read that work, he will probably feel some faint desire at least to know in what way good Doctor Thinkwell had ever been associated with Theodosia, and by what means he knew any thing of herself or her husband; and will excuse the curiosity, which led to much conversation and many conjectures between herself and Mr. Percy, as to who this stranger could possibly be, and what could have been the nature of that favor for which he acknowledged his indebtedness to her. I do not say that it was owing entirely to this that she passed a sleepless night, for there was the heavy tread of passers to and fro upon the deck; the creaking of the tiller-ropes and rudder; the frequent ringing of the pilot's bells, as signals to the engineers; the occasional tolling of the great bell, as a signal to other boats; the constant rattling and jarring of the

* Theodosia, vol. i.,

ponderous machinery; and the splash of the mighty wheels by which they were driven along the surface of the stream: all these combined to hold her waking; and, being awake, she could not help awakening her husband every hour, to tell him of some new conceit concerning the mysterious Doctor; and I trust the reader will excuse her, if she left her state room more anxious to solve this riddle than to study the peculiar characteristics of a Christian Church.

Scarcely were the breakfast things removed, before she desired Mr. Percy to secure an opportunity to renew their conversation. He went out to look for the Doctor, and reported that he was smoking his cigar upon the upper deck. As the night had been sultry and the morning was calm, Mrs. Percy soon persuaded two or three ladies, with whom she had established a travelling acquaintance, that it would be delightful to enjoy the fresh air above. It was not long before Mr. Percy was walking the deck with two young ladies, and his wife was walking with Dr. Thinkwell, deeply engaged in earnest conversation.

"I must say, Dr. Thinkwell, it was too provoking in you to excite my curiosity as you did, and leave it all night unsatisfied. Mr. Percy and I could not sleep for anxiety to learn in what way you became acquainted with a portion of our history, and how it was possible that either of us could ever unconsciously have done you so great a kindness as you intimated yesterday. Now please explain yourself."

"With the greatest pleasure, Madam; but only on the condition that you repay my story by your own; for I suppose I am almost as curious to learn your history, from the time I saw you last, as you are to hear mine."

"Let it be so understood, then. I am ready to promise almost any thing reasonable; only tell me how you came to know us, and what the favor was of which you spoke, and which you were pleased to call the greatest blessing of your life."

"It was, in part, through your instrumentality, Madam that I was recovered from the distractions of infidelity to the peace of faith. But not to keep you longer in suspense, I will tell you how it was. I have an estate in the country, a few miles from your native town, on which I was spending a few months during the summer that you were baptized. One Sabbath morning, as I was riding into town, I noticed a crowd gathering about the old schoolhouse on the common, and, moved only by an idle curiosity, I went up and joined it. I soon discovered that it was a religious meeting, but knew that it must be something uncommon, and therefore dismounted and went in.

"It had been many years since I had been present at *any* religious services; and it was the first time I was ever present at a *Baptist* meeting. The whole scene interested me greatly, from its mere novelty. When the sermon was finished, and you presented yourself so calmly, and related your Christian experience, I will not distress you by saying how much I pitied your enthusiasm, and wondered at your folly. I was, however, greatly interested. I followed you to the river: I felt an involuntary shudder when you were plunged into the water: I gazed upon your face as you came out; and, strange as it may seem to you, I wept with those who wept that day. I was ashamed of it; I saw no reason for it; I chided myself, and called myself a fool for weeping; but I could not restrain my tears.

"I forgot the business for which I had come to town, and returned home sad and thoughtful. I began to ask myself, What if this be *not* all an illusion? what if religion be, after all, a stern reality? what if there be a God? what if the Bible should be true? what if there be a heaven and a hell? Was it not at least *possible* that *I* might be wrong, and the thousands whom I had pitied or despised as dupes, or as impostors, might be right? True, I had often looked over the

argument, and found it all correct; but was it not *possible* that, at some point, my logic had been at fault? Could it do any harm to go over the ground once more? I determined to do so, carefully, step by step; but, in the meantime, I was uneasy; I was distressed; I could think of nothing else. Day after day, and night after night, I returned to the meetings, which you remember were held, first in the schoolhouse, and afterwards in the courthouse. I witnessed all the professions of faith, and all the seventy baptisms; and, though not yet convinced that the Bible was more than a mass of fable and imposture, I spent many hours in its careful study.

“At length it became necessary for me to leave that part of the country. I had but few personal acquaintances, and to none of these did I mention my distress, which continued and increased until it had sensibly undermined my health. I felt that, one way or another, the question *must* be decided; and, slowly and painfully, step by step, my reason struggled back from the dark abyss of atheism, to a firm belief in a glorious, spiritual, intelligent, and efficient First Cause, which men call God; and then, more slowly and laboriously still, to the recognition of the Bible as a revelation from that God to me.

“I will not now even allude to the nature of that process of reasoning by which this work was done. Some time or other we will, should Providence permit, go over all that ground.* What sleepless nights and days of anguish wore away, through the long and dreary months, while this re-investigation was in progress, I almost shudder to remember. And when this work was done—when had I found that there was a God, and that the Scriptures were his message to our race—there came a time of still greater darkness, and more oppres-

* See the argument in “The Infidel’s Daughter,” which may, in some sort, be regarded as a continuation of the present work, by the same author

sive agony of soul. Reason could show me that there was a God; but reason could not tell me what that God requires of him who has broken his laws, and rebelled against his government. This I felt that I had done. I was a sinner. The God of the Bible was a God I had not loved or honored. My very heart revolted against his right to rule me. Yet I tried to conform my life, and even my desires, to the requirements of his Word. The trial was a vain one: I offended every day, and every day was more and more oppressed with a sense of guilt. I needed pardon for the past, and I needed aid in the present. I cannot say that I had any considerable *fear* of punishment. I did not think of this; but I was a sinner, and needed deliverance. I prayed—O! how intense, how earnest, how agonizing was my prayer!—‘Lord, save me; I cannot save myself!’ Like David, I cried, ‘I am distressed: O Lord, undertake for me!’ and, little by little, the light of his love shone into my soul. I began to study more and more the character of Jesus as a *Saviour*. This removed the cloud from much of what had seemed mysterious in the sacred record. ‘He was exalted to be a *Saviour*:’ he was ‘Christ the Lord, a *Saviour*:’ ‘he came to *save* his people from their sins.’ He *could* save me: why should he not? ‘Whosoever will, let him come;’ and ‘come’ especially he says to the ‘weary and heavy laden.’ And, ‘he that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.’ I took him at his word: I asked him to save *me*; I believe he will—he has—he does; and I delight to meet with one who loves him as I do, and tell what great things he has done for my soul.

“Now you have my history, and I shall expect you to tell me yours, beginning from the time of your baptism; and so much of Mr. Percy’s (if he will not tell it himself) as will explain the mystery of his appearing as a clergyman rather than a lawyer.”

“I will keep my promise, Doctor; but you know that when

a lady gets to talking, especially about herself, she never knows when to leave off. And my husband told Mr. Courtney that we would all assemble in the cabin about this time, to renew our investigation of the nature and characteristics of a Church of Christ; and, till I have learned why it is that you could not recognize the body of Christians into whose number you saw me baptized as one, I shall feel as though your history is not quite complete. So let us go down. I hope that Methodist minister will be there, for I am anxious for a full examination of the whole question."

"You cannot be as much so as I am. And with the understanding that you will remember your promise at the first convenient time, we will now go below."

On entering the cabin, they found Mr. Courtney already there, with the Bible open before him, in which he had placed a number of little slips of paper, with a pencil-mark on each, to designate some particular passage which he desired to refer to.

The party were soon seated in order around the table. Some of the other passengers drew near enough to hear, without seeming to take part in the discussion; while others, aware that it would be upon a subject connected with *religion*, quietly drew farther off, that they might not be *annoyed* with any thing so distasteful and unfashionable.

"You understand, I presume," said the Doctor to Mr. Courtney, "that the object which we have in view is simply to ascertain *which* (if any) of those organizations which now claim to be Churches of Jesus Christ, is that which was established by HIM; and which is recognized in the Scriptures as HIS CHURCH? Or, to be more specific and practical, is it the Roman Catholic, the Greek Church, the Episcopal, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, the Congregationalist the Baptist, the Cumberland Presbyterian; or is it all of these or none of these?"

"Certainly, sir. Mr. Percy explained your object to m

soon after I came on board yesterday evening; and I have been considering a little how we could reach it by the most direct and plainest route. It seems to me that it will be important, if not essential, for us first to determine definitely what we mean by The Church of Christ. Let us be sure we know what we are looking for, and then we shall be able to recognize it when we find it. I suppose we may take it for granted that the Lord Jesus Christ has, somewhere in this world, a visible organization of his people, called *his Church*. The very fact that we are looking for it, is evidence that we admit its existence. We need not, therefore, refer to the Scriptures to prove that they speak of it as a perpetual institution, which must continue till the end of time; that is, till Christ shall come again. If proof were needed, however, we have it in the act of institution of one of the ordinances of that organization, in which Christ says, 'As often as ye do it, ye do show forth the Lord's death *until he come*.' And again, in the commission to establish and extend that organization among all nations, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world*.' "

"Of course, Mr. Courtney, no professed Christians doubt that such an organization as the Church of Christ exists, since they all claim that they are members of it."

"Then we may take another step. It is essential to our purpose to know what the Scriptures say about this organization; and, for this end, we must know *by what names they call it*, otherwise we might not be able to tell when they are speaking of it."

"That is well thought of," said the Doctor, "and may save us a great deal of trouble. Much of the controversy which distracts the religious world, I am persuaded, has grown out

of a loose and careless manner of employing words and phrases. Let us be sure to get started right, and then the whole journey will be easy, and pleasant, and safe; and we will be much more likely to arrive at right conclusions."

"The Church of Christ is, in common language," resumed Mr. Courtney, "continually confounded with the kingdom of Christ. Yet it is in fact, and according to Scripture usage a very different thing. It is not the kingdom, but an institution within the kingdom; just as our courts of law are not the State, but a requisite and essential part of the machinery of the State. Let us first get some definite idea of The Kingdom.

"One of the best expositions of this subject which I have seen, is given by Dr. George Campbell, a Scotch Presbyterian, and one of the most candid and erudite writers of the present age. He says, (page 132,) 'The religious institution of which the Lord Jesus is the author, is distinguished in the New Testament by particular names and phrases, with the true import of which it is of very great consequence that we be acquainted, in order to form a distinct apprehension of it, and the nature of the whole. . . The most common appellation given to this institution, or religious dispensation, in the New Testament, is "the kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven;" and the title given to the *manifestation* of this new state is most frequently "the gospel of the kingdom," and, when considered under a somewhat different aspect, "the new covenant."

"The Great Personage himself, to whose administration the whole is intrusted, is, in contradistinction from all others, denominated "The Christ." . . In the phrase, the kingdom of God, or of heaven, there is manifest allusion to the predictions in which this economy was revealed by the prophets in the Old Testament, particularly by the Prophet Daniel, who mentions it in one place as the kingdom which

the God of heaven would set up, and which should never be destroyed; in another, as a kingdom to be given with glory and dominion over all people, nations, and languages, to one like unto the Son of Man.'

"This opinion of the Scotch divine is substantially the same as that given by Mr. Robinson in his Lexicon of the Greek Testament, where he says, 'These phrases' [the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of Christ] 'are synonymous, and signify the Divine spiritual kingdom, the glorious reign of the Messias. The idea of this kingdom has its basis in the prophecies of the Old Testament, where the coming of Messias and his triumphs are foretold.'

"It is certain the prophets had foretold Messias as a king: it is certain that Jesus claimed to be that King. 'Thou sayest it'—I am a king. 'For this end I came into the world.' When John, who came to prepare a people, made ready for this new Sovereign, and preached, '*Repent, for the reign of Heaven has come near,*' (this is a literal translation of Matthew iii. 2, rendered in our version, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,') he doubtless referred to those prophecies, and the people must have so understood him. So when Jesus preached, Matthew iv. 17, saying the same thing; and so when the twelve apostles were sent out to proclaim every where in Israel the same notable words. All who heard them would understand them to mean that the Christ, the Messias of prophecy, had come and had set up, or was about to set up, his long-predicted *kingdom*.

"After John's ministry had ceased, and he was confined in prison, Jesus proclaimed, (Mark i. 15,) 'The time is fulfilled—the kingdom of God is at hand,' or, literally, '*the kingdom has come,*' for the Greek word (*Engiken*) is in the perfect and not the present tense. The time is fulfilled. What time? The answer is plain: that designated by the prophets. The time when the new kingdom should be set

ap, which should ultimately fill the earth; and which should be given to one like unto the Son of Man.

"The old dispensation, with its rites and ceremonies, and complicated types and deep-meaning symbols, was now superseded. The law and the prophets were until John, said the Saviour, but since that time the *kingdom of God* is proclaimed, and every man presseth into it. From the days of John the Baptist until now the *kingdom of Heaven* suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. And to the proud, self-righteous Pharisees and skeptical Sadducees, he said, The publicans and harlots enter into the *kingdom of God* before you. This could not be if the kingdom had not already come.

"That the Jews were actually expecting this kingdom, is evident from the song of Zacharias; from the happy exclamation of good old Simeon; and from the confidence with which Anna, the aged prophetess, spake of the child Jesus to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Luke i. 67, ii. 25, 36. So also we read that Joseph of Arimathea, a good man and just, and one of the Sanhedrim, was of those who *waited for the kingdom of God*; and the two disciples that walked towards Emmaus, talking so sadly of his death, declared that they *had* trusted that it was he who should have redeemed Israel.

"May we not then consider thus much as settled: 1st. That the prophets, and especially Daniel, had foretold the setting up of the Christian institution as the kingdom of God. 2d. That the Jews were looking for and expecting it when Jesus came. And 3d. That John first, and Jesus afterwards, declared that the organization which Christ was about to establish, and did establish, was this kingdom?"

"I do not see why you need to have taken so much trouble to prove this," replied the Doctor, "as I cannot suppose any one ever doubted it. It is no more than this, after all, to wit: that the kingdom of Christ was that organization which

Christ established; and this was a self-evident proposition which needed no proof."

"I trust, then, you will remember this; and if you find yourself or anybody else trying to show that something or other which was in existence *before* the time of John and Christ, or something that originated a thousand years *after* that time, is this Christian kingdom, you will rebuke them for their folly. We have here the first criterion of the Christian institution: that is, that it was organized and had its beginning in the time or about the time that Christ was on the earth. It was not in being before, for the prophets foretold that it should be established *then*. And John and Jesus said that *then* the time was fulfilled. *Then* it was preached. *Then* men pressed into it. *Then* its laws were made. *Then* its ordinances were established. *Then* the character of its members, the mode of initiation, the method of discipline, and whatever else was needful to its organization and perpetuity, were ordained by the Great Personage to whom its administration was intrusted.

"If you will now turn to the prophecy in Daniel xi. 44, you will see that this kingdom, thus established, was to be a *perpetual* kingdom, and that it was at length to destroy all other kingdoms, and to fill the whole earth. Yet it was not to be set up, like other kingdoms, by the instrumentality of *men*. The stone that became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, was cut out *without hands*—it was God's work. So Christ said, his kingdom was not of this world; his servants did not fight. It had no human sovereign—it owned no human laws. God set up the kingdom, and Christ, the ever-living, was to be its King for ever. For the prophet mentions, as two characteristics of this kingdom, that 'it should *never be destroyed*,' and 'the dominion should *not be left to other people*' Christ, in his kingdom, reigns alone and reigns for ever. He will not give his honor to another.

and if we find any kingdom called by his name, which he did not establish, and which is ruled by other Lords or other laws than his, we may be sure that it is falsely named; for, in Christ's kingdom, Christ alone is king. You see, therefore, that we have already at least two signs or marks by which to recognize this kingdom when we find it; namely: It began with Christ and was established by him, and in it he is not only the supreme, but *only* Lord and King. Its subjects or members are such, and only such, as HE has designated: its laws are such, and only such, as HE has enacted. Its officers are such, and only such, as HE appointed. Its ordinances are such, and only such, as HE has instituted. And, unless the Scriptures are unintelligible on the very subject which, of all others, we would expect them to make plain, we can have no serious difficulty in finding out what the constitution of his kingdom was. Let us take the New Testament, therefore, and examine for ourselves

“And first, let us examine such passages as designate the *nature* of this kingdom. Christ says, (John xviii. 36,) when Pilate was questioning him concerning the accusation which the Jews had made against him, ‘*My kingdom is not of this world.*’ It was *in* the world, but not *of* the world. He had no earthly throne. He wore no jewelled crown. He held no regal sceptre. He claimed no worldly power. No marshalled armies fought at his command; nor was he in any respect a worldly king. And yet he was a king; for this end he was born, and for this very object he came into the world. And not to leave the governor entirely in the dark, he adds, the *subjects* of his kingdom are those that believe and obey the truth. ‘Every one that is *of the truth* heareth my voice.’

‘Again, he said to the Pharisees, (Luke xvii 20,) when they demanded to know of him when the kingdom of God would come, ‘The kingdom of God cometh *not with observa-*

tion.' There is nothing about it to excite the attention and admiration of the uninitiated beholder. No one will exclaim, look there, or see here. But the kingdom of God is *within you*. It is an interior *soul* kingdom; and its reign is not one of outward pomp and power, but one of *inward love* and heart-yielding obedience. There was about it nothing to attract the gaze of the wondering world; but yet it was, a *visible* kingdom. Jesus said there were some standing there who should not die till they had *seen* it come with power. And this they did upon the day of Pentecost, and during the few days which followed, when over eight thousand were added to its ranks.

"The subjects of this kingdom were *visible subjects*, men and women who could repent, believe, and be baptized.

"The ordinances of the kingdom were *visible ordinances*, symbolizing to the eye as well as the heart the believer's death to sin, and the Saviour's death for him.

"The laws of the kingdom were *visible laws*, recorded, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, for the instruction and control of its subjects.

"The *Executive* of the kingdom, to which was intrusted the enforcement of those laws, was a *visible organization*, with a fixed and settled constitution, having the extent of its powers, and the manner and occasions of their exercise, clearly pointed out and carefully defined."

"O yes, Mr. Courtney!" exclaimed the Doctor, rather impatiently; "I grant all that. I suppose no one has ever denied that this kingdom was set up by Christ, and that it is a *visible* kingdom. But what I want to know is this: Who were the *subjects* of it? of what sort of people did it consist? and how did they become incorporated into it?"

"Your question is a double one, and must have a double answer. What sort of people were admitted to membership in this kingdom? Ask John. He came to prepare the peo

ple made ready for the organization of the kingdom. He rejected the self-righteous Pharisees and unbelieving Sadducees, and all who claimed admittance for their *parentage*; and received only the *personally penitent*, who believed on him who should come after him. Ask Jesus. He says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for *theirs* is the kingdom of God.' So it seems they are the lowly-minded and humble-hearted. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for *theirs* is the kingdom of God.' So they are such as are ready to *suffer* for the cause of Christ. Moreover, they must be *obedient* to Christ, for he says, 'Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but *whosoever shall do and teach them*, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' But this obedience must not be one of mere *form*. It must not be a mere observance of rites, and ordinances, and ceremonies; for he says, 'Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case *enter into the kingdom of God*.'

"And these requisitions of humility and obedience are further insisted on in several other passages besides those parallel with these.

"When the disciples asked him who should be the *greatest* in the kingdom, he took a little child and set before them, and assured them that except one were *converted*, and made like such a child, he could not enter the kingdom at all, and that he in it who *humbled* himself the most, should be the greatest. So also he taught that *mere profession* was no passport to admittance, but only *actual* obedience. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven.'

"External morality should afford no claim, for he assured the Pharisees and Sadducees that the publicans and harlots

who *repented* at the preaching of John, were going into the kingdom of God before them, and that they not only would not go in themselves, but hindered others from entering.

"A faint resolution and temporary reformation were not sufficient qualifications; for he says, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking *back*, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

"The subjects of this kingdom, we learn from Matt. vi 33, are *willing* or *voluntary* subjects. They come into it, not by compulsion—not *by the act of their parents, or guardians, or sponsors*, but of *their own accord*, and they are not only *willing*, but *desirous* to enter it. '*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*' This language could only be addressed to voluntary agents. And Matthew (ix. 12) seems to convey the idea that they were not only desirous, but exceedingly *anxious* to enter. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the *violent* (that is, the earnest, energetic) take it by force. It is not enough to *seek* to enter in, but they must *strive*, must struggle, must agonize to enter in; 'for many shall *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able.'

"But the decisive and all-including passage is John iii. 3, 5, in which the King is explaining to Nicodemus the nature of membership in his kingdom. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

"These are the principal, if not the only passages, in which the *qualifications for membership in the kingdom* are expressly described in connection with the phrases, 'kingdom of God,' or 'kingdom of heaven.' And this much, at least, is certain: *none are, or can be, REAL members of this dominion, except they have been converted*, have become humble, penitent, believing, and obedient to Christ, and have *sought for citizenship with earnest, heartfelt desire*. Christ's kingdom

is not one of mere outward *forms*. He reigns in the *hearts* of his people. His subjects *obey* him because they *love* him, and no individual who does not sincerely and heartily *LOVE* him; who does not humbly, and yet confidently, *TRUST* in him; and who does not truly, and resolutely, and perseveringly endeavor in all things to *OBEY* him, is a fit subject for his kingdom. He must, in his heart, recognize Christ as his Lord and King, and seek to do his will, before Christ can own him for a subject, and treat him as a son."

"I think that I now begin to understand you," said the Doctor. "You regard *all those who love Christ as equally the subjects of this visible kingdom.*"

"Not at all, sir. You mistake me altogether. I have been trying to answer your *first* question, which related to the kind of people who compose the kingdom. I have not yet approached the second, which asked *how they became incorporated into it.* The penitent, the believing, the humble, the loving, and obedient, are fit subjects, and the *only* fit subjects for the kingdom. They are members of Christ's *invisible* kingdom. Christ reigns in their *hearts*: Christ rules in their *lives*. They are his by redemption, and will reign with him in glory. But something more is needful, to make them members of his *visible* kingdom, which is that for which we now are looking. They are such as he has recognized as having a *right to membership*, but they are not yet members of it. Abel and Abraham, David and Daniel, Job and Joshua, and all the mighty host of the ancient saints, possessed this character. They were the children of God. They trusted him and loved him. They were the obedient upon the earth, and now rejoice with him in heaven. But they were not the subjects of that kingdom which Jesus Christ set up in the days of Pontius Pilate, for it was not yet in being. It had not been established. They foresaw it: they foretold it: they rejoiced that it was coming, but they could not be members

of it till it came. If they had lived in the days of its existence, they would have possessed all the qualifications for membership, and would, doubtless, have become members. *But something more than their piety of heart would have been needful to make them members.*

"Christ, as King, has appointed a visible door of entrance into his visible kingdom. Those who would be subjects of it must *first* 'be made such in *their hearts*;' and then, when they have been thus 'duly and truly prepared,' they may be and must be *initiated* by the ceremony which HE has appointed. They have ceased to *love* the world in their hearts, and now they must openly come out *from* the world, and acknowledge subjection to him in that form and manner which HE has prescribed. Until they have done this, they may be his subjects *in fact*, but they are not his in *proper form*. They may be his in *heart*, but they do not belong to his *organized and visible* kingdom."

"I think," said Mrs. Percy, "I can illustrate what you mean :

"A king has set up his throne in the midst of a rebellious population, who have refused to obey him, and say, in heart and practice both, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

"He surrounds himself with a few faithful subjects. He gives them a code of laws; and, among others, presents a certain *form* which shall be used in the case of every rebel who shall change his mind and join their ranks.

"This code of laws is made public both in the kingdom and out of it; so that all of both parties may know what is required of him who comes into the ranks of the faithful.

"Now, when any of the rebels has grown weary of rebellion, and laid down his arms, and has determined *in his heart* to serve the King, he may be *called a subject*. He is no longer a rebel. He has in heart become obedient to the King. He

recognizes his authority. He intends and tries to do his will; but he is not *legally* and *visibly* a subject till *he has gone through the form of reception prescribed by the King*. And if he were in *fact* obedient, and knew of the requirement, he would of himself seek at once for such a regular and legal admission; he would not continue to live among the rebels and be counted of their number. This was the first act of obedience: the test appointed by the King to *try* if he were in fact obedient. And so long as he neglected or refused to *obey* in *this* particular, so long he would not be counted among the faithful."

"But what," said Mr. Percy, "if some who professed to be the officers of the kingdom and expounders of the law, should assure him that some *other* test was that which was required; or that *no* test at all was needful in his case?"

"Then I would say that these wicked men falsely and wrongfully hindered him from entering in, and that if all the circumstances were known to the King, he would love him, and reward his good intentions as though they had been carried into effect. But yet he *could not*, without *repudiating his own law, and abrogating the form of admission which he had himself enacted*, consider him as an actual member of his kingdom."

"I thank you, Mrs. Percy," exclaimed the Doctor. "Your beautiful comparison has made the whole matter perfectly plain. Christ is the King. He set up his kingdom in the midst of rebels. He sends his messengers to tell them of his goodness, and strive to win their hearts; for his reign is one of love. When any one is convinced of wrong, and converted to the right, he is a *fit subject* FOR *his kingdom*; but he is yet only prospectively and not actually IN his kingdom. To enter it in person, as he has in heart, bodily and visibly, as he has in spirit and in purpose, he must take the *oath of allegiance*, by submitting to baptism, the *initiatory rite pro-*

scribed by the King. Till this is done, he may be a *friend* to the King, but he lives among his enemies. He may be subject to the King in feeling, but he has not put on his liv-
ery and joined his ranks. And fearful must be the responsi-
bility of those who venture, in the face of CHRIST'S *express*
command, to assure him that if the *heart is right*, the King
requires no more; or to mislead him into the belief that he
requires *something else*, instead of that which HE com-
manded. But when one expounder of the law says one
thing, and another something else, how is the new-born sub-
ject to know what to do?"

"He must examine the law *for himself*, sir," replied Mr
Courtney; "and he will not find it double-tongued. The
King made his commandment *very plain*, and none misunder-
stood it until the wicked had perverted it. But let us not wan-
der from the point before us. You see that if we will embrace
all the fit subjects for the kingdom, all the humble, penitent,
believing, and obedient, we must have an *invisible* kingdom,
the limits of which are only known to Him who searches all
hearts and knows all thoughts.

"I am very willing to recognize such a kingdom. It
includes hundreds and thousands of most excellent and hea-
venly-minded children of God, who are not in the visible
kingdom: some who, though converted, have never yet pub-
licly professed their faith in any form. They may have had
no opportunity; they may not have felt sufficient confidence
in their love for the King; or, like yourself, Doctor, they
may be yet in doubt about what the real visible kingdom is,
and where it may be found, and how it must be entered. It
includes thousands who have been imposed upon by their
spiritual guides, and taught to believe that they *are already*
in Christ's kingdom, while they are in some *other organiza-*
tion, as unlike it as possible, in every thing but name. They
are good and pious children of God. They love the Saviour,

and Christ reigns in their hearts on the earth, and they will reign with Christ in heaven. They are *his*, and he knows them to be his: they are in his invisible *spiritual* kingdom, but they are *not* in his *visible* kingdom; nor can they be until they have entered it by that visible and significant ordinance which the King appointed for this purpose. To illustrate what I mean, what writer has ever exhibited a deeper and more spiritual knowledge of the work of grace in the believer's heart than Thomas à Kempis? What minister of Christ has ever shown more evidence of love to Christ, and love to souls, than Fénelon? What woman has ever done and suffered more for the cause of the Redeemer than did Madame Guyon? Yet none of these were in the visible kingdom of Christ, unless the Church of Rome is the kingdom of Christ, and not of Antichrist. And as there are many in the invisible kingdom who are not in the visible, so there are many in the visible who have no right there, and never will be recognized by the King. The rite of initiation *confers no moral qualities*; and without penitence and faith preceding, it is of no avail. Simon the sorcerer was baptized and regularly initiated into Christ's *visible* kingdom, but he had neither part nor lot in the matter. He was as deeply steeped in the gall of bitterness, and as strongly bound with the chains of iniquity, after his baptism as he was before; while the poor thief who died upon the cross was not baptized and never initiated, and yet he entered the Paradise of God in company with his Redeemer.

"It was, sir," addressing the Methodist, "precisely this error (confounding the visible with the invisible kingdom) that first led to the introduction of infant baptism. The Saviour said, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;' meaning thereby (if he referred to water baptism) his *visible* kingdom on the earth, that about which we have been talking; but men understood it of the *invisible* kingdom, or kingdom of glory

in heaven, and so determined that as baptism was the only door of entrance into heaven, it should be denied to none, not even to new-born babes."

"Pardon me, Mr. Courtney," said the Doctor, "but we are wandering from our subject. We were examining the nature of the *visible kingdom* of Christ as it was established by him when he was here, and is destined to continue till he shall come again. We have ascertained that it was to consist of humble-minded penitents, who were obedient to the laws of Christ, and trusted in him for their salvation; and that when thus qualified *for it*, they were to be introduced *into it* by the rite of baptism. And although some of different character might be initiated, they were but enemies and rebels still, though bearing the name of friends and subjects; and though some having this character had been prevented from initiation, and so could not be counted as actual members, yet they were not thereby divested of their title to those spiritual and eternal blessings which are promised to those possessing the character of subjects. I think we may now conclude that we understand the nature of this kingdom in its relation to *individuals*. Considered as *purely spiritual*, or as the *invisible kingdom*, it includes all who in their hearts have taken Christ to be their King, and in their lives are yielding him (so far as they know his requirements) a prompt and sincere obedience. Considered as his *visible kingdom*, as an *organized institution*, it includes those of this character who have *come out from the world* and separated themselves to him by an open profession of their allegiance, *and have been regularly initiated by the rite of baptism*, as the King ordained.

"But now I am as far as ever from the object which I had in view when I entered on this investigation. *I want to know where and which this kingdom is, and how I can be incorporated into it*. I trust I am a member of what we have called *the invisible kingdom*. I am a subject of the King at heart

La has in his mercy given me a *desire to obey him*; and he requires me to *profess him before men, and visibly unite with his people*. Can you tell me *where they are*, and *how I am to get among them*? There are at least a *dozen* different organizations, each claiming to consist of genuine believers, who have been baptized. I know them, for the most part, to be good and pious people, and am not yet entirely convinced that their sprinkling is not valid baptism. So far as we have yet advanced, therefore, they all have equal claims upon me; yet I know they cannot *all* be right, or else they would all agree. Christ's kingdom cannot be divided against itself, for Christ himself declared that if it were so it must fall. 'A house divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.' I know, therefore, that *all these separate and rival organizations, with their various forms of government, opposite systems of faith, and clashing interests, cannot be his kingdom*; but you have yet shown me no sign by which to distinguish which of them all is really his."

"Have a little patience, Doctor. We have not yet finished our survey of the kingdom. We have ascertained, indeed, that *it consists of professed believers who have been baptized*; and this clue, if you would follow it out, would lead you to the truth. But we will not abandon our main subject yet in order to follow it. It remains now to consider the kingdom in regard to *its organization*. You have ascertained its *membership*: now let us look at its *government*, or polity. This kingdom not only has *members*, or citizens, but it has a *King*, and a *code of laws*, and an *executive body* by which, in the King's name and by his authority, they are administered. To this *executive body*, and to it alone, the King intrusts the visible administration of his government. Now if we find *any organization claiming to be this kingdom, or a part of this kingdom, the members of which have not been baptized*

you must set them aside on the ground already settled, *viz.* that Christ's *visible* kingdom consists not of believers merely but of *baptized* believers; and if we find any organization which has rejected Christ from being King (not formally, but actually) *by acknowledging subjection to another ruler*, or to other laws than his, we may at once reject its claims upon this ground. It *cannot* be the kingdom of Christ unless it is ruled by *his laws*, administered by *his executive*, and enforced by *his authority*."

"That is self-evident, sir. But where and what is *this executive* of which you speak?"

"It is that organization called in the New Testament '*the Church*.'"

"I had thought, sir, that the Church and the kingdom were the same thing—merely different names for the same object."

"Not at all, sir. The Church is a *local* organization, charged by the King with the execution of his laws. It is *in* the kingdom: it makes a *part* of the kingdom: it is subject to the *laws* of the kingdom; *but it is not the kingdom*, any more than the courts of law and the executive of any state are themselves the state."

"My dear sir, you astonish me. Is not the term Church in the Scriptures continually and almost invariably used as synonymous with the kingdom? Does it not comprise all the visible body of professing Christians? I am sure such is the general impression. How else should we read of the Church universal, of the ancient Church, of the Church militant, and the Church triumphant?"

"You do *not* read thus *in the Scriptures*, sir. The Holy Catholic, or universal Church, is a figment of men. The Scriptures commonly employ the word to signify only a *local* assembly of Christian people, who meet together in one place to observe Christ's ordinances, and to transact the business relating to his kingdom. In the few places where it has a

more extended meaning, it is used metaphorically, by virtue of that very common and natural figure of speech in which the name of a part is applied to the whole. It is *never* used in Scripture to designate such an ecclesiastical establishment as that which you call the Church of England, the Church of Rome, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, and the like. But the elaboration of this point will require no little time, and I fear some of our company may even now be weary of this dry discussion. We have seen what Christ's *kingdom* is, and let that suffice us for to-day. To-morrow we will try to get some definite conception of the nature of his *Church*."

"I am content," replied the Doctor; "for, to own the truth, these things are so new to me that I feel I need time to review the ground we have gone over, and make myself *sure* that we have not travelled out of the record. Let me take my Bible, and examine again all these passages which speak of this kingdom; and when we meet here in the morning, I may be ready to take the other step in this investigation. And Mr. Percy, with your consent I shall invite your good lady to take a walk with me on deck, and fulfil a promise which she made yesterday."

"I surely will not object, sir, provided I can make an arrangement for myself as agreeable as that of yesterday."

The company disappeared from the ladies' cabin, and were soon talking of other matters.

The Doctor claimed of Theodosia that she should, according to her promise, relate her own and Mr. Percy's history from the time of her baptism. She told him much, but she did not tell him *all*; and we feel that it is due to the reader of these pages that he should be made particularly acquainted with some facts to which she scarcely alluded; and moreover, there were some things which she told which are already known to him who has perused the first volume of this work

We think it best, therefore, to resume the narrative where we left off; and go on to tell it in our own way.

The reader will remember that Mr. Percy had been converted to Christ on his way home—had gone into the meeting at the Court-house, related his experience of grace, and been received as one proper to be baptized. Before he had been baptized, however, he was stricken down suddenly by the hand of disease. Long time the balance wavered between death and life. By his avowal of his faith, and application for baptism, Theodosia felt that the only barrier to their contemplated union had been removed—he was her own betrothed again. She longed to tell him how her heart had poured its very life out in that sad and almost fatal letter which she felt had caused his sickness.

Called to his bedside by his mother and his physician, (as we have seen in the other volume,) she became to him not only the angel of his dreams, but the ministering angel of his waking hours. When he was strong enough to talk, he told her how bitterly his heart had wept at the remembrance of his vain attempt to persuade her to deny her Lord for him—to refuse obedience to Christ's plain and imperative command, in order that she might not grieve or offend him whom she loved more than all else but Christ. He told her how he had wished to recall that rashly-written letter; how he had hoped it would have no effect upon her conduct; how happy he was to find that she had done her duty, without regarding it; how much more firmly he could trust her now—how much more tenderly he loved her now—since he had realized that nothing could turn her from the path of right.

And did she tell him how that letter of his had rent and crushed her heart? Did she tell him how it had for the time almost dethroned her reason? Did she tell him with what agony she slowly and mournfully came to her decision to give up all—to give up even *him*—for Christ?

She only told him how she had reproached herself for writing an answer which had caused him so much suffering.

"What!" exclaimed he, "did you send an answer to my letter? I never saw it—I did not know that you had written one!"

This suggested a new thought. She knew from the doctor that he *had* seen it. She knew that it had driven him to the very door of death. The doctor had taken it from the hand that grasped it, even as he lay senseless upon his office-floor. She had it now in her possession. But Mr. Percy had no remembrance of it: the hand that struck him was so heavy that it stunned the brain; and he had never realized from what source the blow had come. She turned the conversation to another theme.

"You are rapidly getting your strength again. The doctor says that you are now out of danger. I must leave you, and return home."

"Not to-day, I hope."

"No; but if you continue to improve, I must to-morrow. There is no longer any *necessity* for my presence."

"I see how it is," he replied. "You came when they told you I was like to die; and now your delicacy suggests that you ought not to stay. Well! be it so; but let me tell you, dearest, that your coming saved my life. My mind, I know, has sometimes wandered; and I am conscious now of a strange fancy—I know not whence it came—that you had utterly disowned and cast me off. This fancy preyed upon my heart, and gnawed away my life. Sometimes, in my dreams—it may have been in my delirium—I saw your image hovering about the room, looking so tenderly and pitifully into my eyes that I began to doubt if it were not my Theodosia; and when I found that you were really here—that it was your kind hand that prepared my food—your hand that gave me drink—your voice that answered my feeblest call, and

your presence that calmed my distracted mind, I at once grew strong—I had something to live for; and now I feel that I shall live to make you at least some return of love for all your care.”

“There, hush now, Mr. Percy; you are talking too long, and will bring back your fever. Try to compose yourself to sleep. Your mother will stay with you till I return;” and she stole away to pour out her heart in thanksgiving to that Redeemer who was giving back to her, one after another, all the treasures which she had given up, in her purpose that she might keep his commandment.

She returned to her mother’s; and it was not many days before the conversation was renewed in the little parlor of Mrs. Ernest’s cottage.

Several weeks had passed. Mr. Percy was well and strong again: he had returned to his office, and was earnestly engaged in closing up his business. He had determined to abandon his profession, and engage in the work to which he felt the Lord had called him; but of this he had as yet said nothing, except to his friend and confidant, Dr. Woodruff.

“What,” asked the Doctor, “will Theodosia say to this? You may abandon your business, in which you could soon realize a fortune, and devote *yourself* to a life of hardship and poverty; but have you a right to entail poverty upon *her*? Are you willing to see *her* lead the life of a poor pensioner on the reluctant *alms* of Baptist churches?”

“O no, my friend, nothing of that sort will be necessary. The ministers of Christ are worthy of their hire. They *earn* their support. It is not alms, but wages they receive.”

“Yes, yes, you may well say they *earn* it. They *earn* vastly more than they get; but though they earn it, those who receive the benefit of their labors usually understand that they are under no *obligation* to pay for them; and that the preacher should be very thankful if they condescend to

give him the means of a bare subsistence. Look at the facts, Mr. Percy. Here are some twenty Baptist churches in this county: is there any one of them that gives its pastor even a bare support? I know these people better than you do. They will pay their doctors, and pay their lawyers, and pay their mechanics and their merchants; but they seem to me to have deliberately made a calculation to ascertain just how *little* a preacher can barely subsist upon, and that *little* they *promise* to pay him, but feel that it is only a gift—a mere matter of alms—which he cannot *legally collect*; and therefore they *forget* it and *neglect* it, until he becomes disheartened, and removes to another church, to be deluded again by similar promises. Some of the members are always glad when this occurs; for from that moment they feel released from all obligation ever to pay what they had promised him.”

“Surely,” said Mr. Percy, “this must be an exaggeration. No Christian people could so disregard not merely the demands of common honesty, but also the express injunction of the Saviour, that ‘They who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.’”

“I think so too,” replied his friend; “and for this very reason I am disposed greatly to doubt whether these Baptists are Christian people. As you have not joined them yet, I hope you won’t get angry at my saying so.”

“If I *had* joined them, I should be very silly to be angry at the truth; but I can’t believe that this *is truth*.”

“Let me convince you, then. There is old Mr. Doe: I know his history. He entered the ministry after he had a family, and he gave up a profitable employment to do so. He has been the pastor of half the churches in the county. Everybody has confidence in him—everybody esteems him a good minister; but he was never eloquent, and now he is old, and in absolute want. He told me himself that three hundred dollars was the most that he had ever received in one

year for preaching; and to get that he had to serve four churches, two of them over thirty miles from his residence. Several years he has realized less than half that sum; and never has he been able to provide for his family as well as a common mechanic, or even a day-laborer. Then there is the minister by whom Miss Ernest was immersed. He has talents which, at the bar or in the forum, would place him among the first men of the State. Few speakers can equal his persuasive eloquence. He is popular as a preacher, and beloved as a man. He is the pastor of a church which has in its membership several who could each pay him five hundred dollars a year, and never feel it; but they give him four hundred to preach to them twice a month, and he gets about a hundred and fifty more from two other churches. Before he entered the ministry, he had some property. He is a man of cultivated taste; and his family have been accustomed to genteel society, and feel that it is necessary to their happiness to have about them not merely the bare necessities, but some of the comforts, not to say the luxuries of life. The consequence is, that he is every year drawing upon and rapidly exhausting his patrimony; and should he live ten years, is likely to be reduced to the same poverty with Mr. Doe; and these are but instances of what is common, almost universal."

"It may be, my friend, that you are correct in regard to this. I know that the Baptists are a poor and obscure people, and I suppose they have not the ability to provide very bountifully for their ministers."

"It is not their poverty, my dear sir, but their parsimony. You will find them *rich* enough, but too *stingy*—that is the word, sir—too *stingy*, too niggardly, too avaricious, too covetous, too selfish, to provide for anybody but themselves. They *must have preaching*, and they think they can't do well without at least one sermon a month. So they contrive to get *that much* for the least possible sum—usually not over one cent a

week for each church member; and then they call themselves *generous*, and think they have conferred a great favor on the preacher when they have doled out to him this pitiful sum.

"Now, Mr. Percy, if you are willing to live such a life yourself, and subject Miss Ernest to all the sufferings and sorrows of disappointed hope, degraded social position, and absolute penury, then marry her, give up your lucrative profession, and become a Baptist preacher"

"You make the picture dark indeed," said Mr. Percy; "but I trust there is some brighter view of it. I must talk with Mr. Courtney about this subject—not that I have any hesitation about what I must do, but that I may understand how it has come to pass that these disciples of Jesus are so disregardful of his laws. As for myself, *I shall preach Christ's gospel, whether I am fed or starved. I must preach.* I feel that God has called me to this work; and woe is me if I draw back. I am not now prepared to preach; but after my baptism I intend to devote my time to such studies as will prepare me for it. And I do not feel that it can be any half-way devotion that I must give to the ministry of salvation. I will, God helping me, give it *all* my life, and *all the energies of all my life.* I can endure poverty, I can endure hardships, I can——"

"Just stop one moment," interrupted his friend. "Can you give up Miss Ernest, or, what will to you seem worse, can you subject *her* to poverty, hardships, and contempt, when it is in your power to set her among the highest? Answer this question to yourself before you act."

Mr. Percy's countenance fell. He had not seen the matter in this light. He sat down by his table with a heavy heart, and began to calculate how much he was already worth, and how long it would take him to realize a sum which would secure the future Mrs. Percy a respectable income, independent of what he might receive for his preaching

The conclusion did not seem quite satisfactory, for he sighed deeply as he looked up from the figures, and then slowly and abstractedly walked over to Mrs. Ernest's cottage.

Theodosia read in his face as he came in that there was some thing heavy on his heart, and was not slow to find a way to induce him to tell her what it was.

' You know Theo., that I am to be baptized to-morrow, and that the coming Thursday is our anticipated wedding day.'

"Certainly; and though that might make a sensible man look serious, I don't see why it should make you sad."

"When you agreed to be my wife, I was a lawyer. I had a lucrative business, which promised yearly still increasing returns. I did not solicit your hand until I felt that I should have it in my power to place you in that position in society which your accomplishments so fit you to adorn. I loved you too well to desire that you should be a poor man's wife, though that poor man had been myself."

"Well, Mr. Percy, I am very much obliged to you; and let me say that I loved you too well to be anybody's wife but yours, though he had been as rich as Girard, and you as poor as Job, when he had lost every thing but life. Is there any thing in that to make you sad?"

"But, my dear Theodosia, I have been led to feel that I must abandon my profession, and with it all my hopes of wealth, or even of a comfortable subsistence. I can easily submit to this for myself, but I have no right to subject *you* to want and obscurity."

"Then I suppose you have, with many others, come to the conclusion that no strictly honest Christian man can be successful as a lawyer?"

"No, no: the law, indeed, presents great temptations, but I know many an honest lawyer. It is not because I have any objection to my present profession, but because I am drawn

so forcibly towards another, that I feel compelled to give it up."

"It is true, then," said she, while a gleam of hope and joy flashed from her eyes, and she leaned towards him as she spoke: "it is true that my prayer is heard, and God has called you to become a minister of his Word."

"I have indeed been led to determine, as God shall open up the way for me, to spend my life in preaching Jesus to the lost."

"And did you fancy this would be sad news to me, that you came with such a sorrowful face to tell me of it? It has been for weeks the great desire of my heart, and the chief burden of my prayers."

"But, my dear Theo., you do not consider that to be a Baptist minister is to be *poor*—to spend a life of hardship and toil without reward—almost, as I am told, without the means of comfortable subsistence. I have lived long enough to know that the wants of life are stern realities: they must be provided for. We have both of us been accustomed to the enjoyment of some of even the elegances of social life. It will be scarcely possible for us to live in comfort upon such a sum as Baptist churches are accustomed to pay their ministers, even if I should realize as much as the best of them and that I cannot look for. What I have been thinking of is this: if I could give some five years to the law, I might secure a sum sufficient for our comfort; and *then* I could give myself entirely to the work of the Master."

"And if in those five years souls should perish that you might have been the instrument to save—what then?"

"It is that which perplexes me."

"Will you permit me," inquired she, "to advise you? I know that I have no acquaintance with *business*; but one thing I am sure of, and that is, duty must be done, let consequences be what they may"

"But have not consequences something to do in determining what is duty?"

"Surely they have; and if the loss of never-dying souls is likely to be the consequence of your taking time to make a little fortune, it seems to me you will not hesitate. As for me, I am not desirous to be rich. I find more promises to the poor than to the wealthy, and great promises to those who have abandoned houses and lands for Christ."

"But Dr. Woodruff assures me that the Baptist churches do so little for their ministers, that it is impossible for a family to live comfortably upon the scanty pittance which they reluctantly give, rather as charity than wages, for his self-denying labor."

"What if the Doctor does say this? *Jesus Christ* says, Lay not up for yourself treasure upon earth. He says, Take no thought what you shall eat or what you shall drink, for our Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things; and He who feeds the sparrows, and clothes the lilies, will also care for us."

"But I don't feel as though I can trust myself, and especially yourself, to the tender mercies of these Baptist churches; though I am sure the facts can't be quite so bad as my friend represented them."

"But don't you see, Mr. Percy, that *we don't have to trust to THE CHURCHES, but to our Father in heaven*, who holds the hearts of all men in his hands? The silver is his, and the gold also; and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Let us humbly try to do *his* will, and HE will see to it that we have all we need."

"So you are willing to risk all, and really think I ought to enter at once upon this work?"

"Why no, Mr. Percy, I am not willing to *risk* any thing. I have *God's promise* that we shall be provided for; and it is not *risking* any thing to believe that God tells the truth and

to take him at his word. We will do what he requires, and he will do what he has promised. *It can't be otherwise.*"

"But see how the churches have left good old Mr. Doe to pine in poverty, after he has given his life to their service."

"Yes, I have heard of that. It may be that the churches have done wrong; but if old Brother Doe has trusted in God, he is not the loser by his poverty. All things are working together for his good. We may be left to suffer poverty also. It was no more than Jesus did for us; and if it should be so, we may rejoice, even in our poverty, that we are permitted to *suffer* for his sake; for the apostle says, if we *suffer* with him, we shall also be *glorified* with him."

"May God bless you, my angel of hope and love! Would that I had your faith! But it shall be as you suggest. *I will give up all*—I will proclaim *Christ's gospel*, and trust *Christ* for the results. It was not for myself, but on your account that I hesitated; but you are the helper of my weakness. I will try to trust in God, as you do. But there is one thing yet which troubles me. The facts related to me by Dr. Woodruff in regard to the parsimony of these Baptist churches in the support of their ministry, have raised in my mind a *doubt*—in fact, a *serious doubt*—whether they *are*, after all, the churches of Jesus Christ."

"How so?"

"The Lord Jesus, both by his personal teachings and by the teachings of his Spirit, inculcated liberality. *His* people must be a *liberal* people. He charged them again and again to *give*; instructed them to labor, working with their hands; not that they might lay up wealth, but that they might have something to *give* to him that needeth. He warned them not to lay up their treasures on the earth, and assured them that they could not serve God and money, (for that is the meaning of 'Mammon.') He told them that it was more blessed to *give* than to receive; that the ministers of his gospel were

worthy of their *hire*; that those who preached the gospel should live of the gospel; that those who ministered in spiritual things should be ministered unto in carnal things; and now, in view of all this, when I find a church that is willing to enjoy the labors and instructions of a minister of Jesus without return, or one so avaricious as to give only the *very smallest pittance* that will secure a sermon once a month, while they are abundantly able to provide comfortably for a pastor's support, I can't help thinking *it is not his church*; and I would not like to be connected with it, either as a member or a minister."

"It is probable that you do not yet know *all* the facts in regard to this matter. You have heard one side; Mr. Courtney, or some other Baptist of experience and observation, could tell you the other. As for *our* little church, it has but just now been organized; and you know very well it is *unable* to do much, and so it may be with many others. Let this thought pass till you get more accurate information; and now tell me by what means you have been led to feel that you must give yourself to the ministry."*

* The reader will find the best apology which Mr. Courtney knew how to make for the parsimony of the Baptist churches farther on. It must be admitted that there is a most deplorable amount of truth in the allegations of Dr. Woodruff; and Mr. Percy's fears of what would probably be the treatment of the churches to himself and family were not only natural, but more than justified by the facts which must have stared him in the face had he been at all familiar with the relationship which very generally in this country exists between the pastors and their people. It is a mournful truth that the churches do not give their ministers a reasonable support. It is lamentable to see how many of the best and noblest minds are driven out of the pulpit into the schoolroom, or the workshop, or other place of secular business, by the apprehension of absolute want. It is sad to think how many who would probably be most useful and efficient ministers are prevented by such fears from ever entering the ministry

"I hardly know when or how this conviction came into my mind: but from the time I found myself trusting in Jesus as a lost and helpless sinner, and felt that I was saved by his abounding goodness and almighty power, I gave myself to him. Since then I have felt that I am not my own, but His who died to save me; I must live, not for myself, but for him; I must not do what is desirable to myself, but what is pleasing to him. When I was beginning to recover from that sickness which prostrated me so suddenly, I became conscious of an impression upon my mind that if I recovered I must give myself to the work of the ministry. At first I cast aside the thought as utterly preposterous. I had spent my youth and early manhood in preparing for another occupation, with which I had no reason to be dissatisfied, and upon which I had already entered: why should I now change all my plans? But the impression continually returned: it came with greater and greater power. I tried to reason it away, but still I *felt* that I must preach; and at length, since I have been entirely restored, I find my highest reason taking sides with the feeling. Souls are perishing; God has instituted the ministry as one means—perhaps the chief means—of bringing them to salvation; I have the capacity to study and to teach; I *can* preach, and if I can I *must* preach, and thus do what I can to make known to the lost the glorious gospel of the Son of God.

Few have the utter self-consecration of Mr. Percy, and scarcely any such a comforter to speak words of hope and trust to their doubting hearts. There is a fearful, an awful weight of responsibility resting upon our churches in regard to this subject. Let them look to it that God does not require at their hands the price of souls. Are there not *some* of them who have good reason to fear that by their parsimony they have forfeited the right to be regarded as the *true* churches of Him who has expressly provided that they who *preach* the gospel shall live of the gospel?

"But I had never thought until to-day of *all* the difficulties in the way of doing so. I did not realize till now that to become a minister of the gospel was to place my ear to the door-post, and have it bored, in token of perpetual servitude. I never felt till to-day that by determining to be a minister among the Baptists I resigned all hope not only of preferment and honor—not only of wealth and ease, but of even what will to us be the comforts, almost the necessities, of life. I never felt till to-day that to be a minister was not only to be *poor*, but to be *dependent*; to be regarded by the churches and my brethren not as a laborer worthy of his *hire*, but as a needy pensioner, not upon their bounty, but upon their parsimony; to feel that when I had abandoned wealth and fame and ease and comfort for their sake and the gospel's, that they would but regard me as an object of their *charity*—a fit subject for their *alms*. But even this I did not shrink from till I thought of you. I could endure it for myself; but how can I see you subjected to such things?"

"O, don't be troubled about me: our Heavenly Father will see to it that I have no sorrow to endure, no hardship to bear, that is not for my good. Does he not say that *all* things shall work together for the good of them that love him? And what if we should suffer all these things? Has he not bidden us, having merely food and raiment, therewith to be content; and told us that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory? We do not need the comforts of the world when we have the joys of his salvation. We do not need the honors of the world when we have that honor which cometh from God only."

"Well, my darling comforter, let it be so. We will enter upon this work of saving souls together: together we will *labor*, together we will study, together we will pray, and you

shall teach me how to walk by faith and not by sight, and to endure as seeing HIM who is invisible."

The evening of the next Sabbath had been appointed for his baptism. The crowd that gathered on the river-bank would probably have been larger than had ever assembled there on a similar occasion, but that a sudden shower of rain shut many up at home, and scattered most of those who had come out. He walked firmly and calmly into the water, was baptized, and came up out of the water, but gave no expression to his thoughts or feelings. Except the simple baptismal hymn which the brethren and sisters sang as they were going down the bank, all was silence. Some hard hands grasped his most heartily as he came up; but his formal recognition as a church member was postponed until the regular prayer-meeting on Tuesday night..

At that time, after the ordinary exercises of singing and prayer, Mr. Courtney, who had been created one of the deacons of the church when it was organized a few weeks before, requested the brethren to resolve themselves into a *church meeting* for the transaction of certain business. This was done by calling one of the deacons to preside, (there being no pastor,) singing a verse or two of a familiar hymn, and invoking the presence and sanction of the Master of assemblies.

Mr. Courtney then suggested that Brother Percy should now be formally recognized as a member of that church by extending to him the right hand of fellowship, which they had no good opportunity to give him at the water's side.

Mr. Percy took his stand in a convenient place, and the deacons first, and then the brethren and the sisters, passed by in regular order, and each gave to him the hand of fellowship. Nor was this a mere form. He saw tears in many eyes. He saw deep feeling upon almost every face, and could not help realizing that with their hands they gave their *hearts* in Chris-

man love. When this was done, Mr. Courtley arose and spoke somewhat as follows :

“Brethren and sisters:—I have learned that our young brother whom we have just received has felt himself called to the work of the ministry. It is proper for the church to give her sanction to that call, if she should think it in fact the call of God. In order that we may have an opportunity to judge in reference to this point, and learn for ourselves concerning his aptness to teach, I move you that our brother Percy be requested to exercise his gifts among us. Though but recently made one of our company, we have long known him as an upright and moral man. Some of us know that like Timothy, he has been taught the Scriptures from a child and now that he has been taught of the Spirit, we may reasonably expect that he may be able to teach others. He is not like the ‘*novice*,’ newly converted from heathenism, for he has been thoroughly instructed in the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion ; and though it will be proper for him to make further proof of his call before he can be *ordained to the ministry*, yet I conceive there will be no impropriety in his entering at once upon the work of calling sinners to repentance. Shall we invite him to proclaim the gospel in our hearing on next Sabbath, that we may have an opportunity to understand the nature of his gifts?”

As the vote was about to be taken, Mr. Percy arose and said, “Excuse me, brethren : I have indeed felt that it is my duty to preach Christ’s gospel. Nay, I feel that ‘woe is me if I preach not the gospel ;’ and in my purpose I have already given myself up solely to this work. But I am not *ready* to enter upon those duties now. I need a course of careful study. I must read some system of divinity. I acknowledge to you that, so far as I can now remember, I have never read a strictly theological book. I am, therefore, utterly unprepared at *this time* to preach the glorious gospel of our blessed Lord

But by God's mercy I hope soon to obtain the needful qualifications, if intense study and an earnest desire for knowledge can secure them."

"Our brother," replied Mr. Courtney, "mistakes our purpose. We do not propose now to *ordain* him an *elder*, or, what is the same thing, a *bishop*. We need some proof of his call of God before we can do that. But we propose merely to ask and authorize him to show, by teaching us, his capacity to teach, and his qualifications for the work to which he thinks that God has called him. Let him study as diligently as he will, it will not hinder his studies to tell us from week to week what he has learned. But we trust that he will remember that *our* book of divinity is the *Bible*, and *our* theology is all to be found in that one comprehensive work. Our gospel is Christ, and him crucified, with those doctrines and precepts which gather of necessity around this one great centre of our faith and hope. Let him take the New Testament, and *study* (*not merely read*) the teachings of Christ and the apostles, until his very soul is imbued with their meaning, and baptized in their spirit, and then come and tell to us what they have taught to him, and he will be just such a teacher as many of us are just now needing."

The church invited him to speak to them on the next Sabbath; and after his previous convictions of duty, he did not dare to refuse.

This was on Tuesday night. On Thursday there was a little company of friends gathered in Mrs. Ernest's little parlor, and Miss Theodosia Ernest became Mrs. Percy.

On Sabbath morning, with many fears, and a heart crying within him, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Mr. Percy preached his first sermon. His mind was strong, and had been thoroughly trained to close investigation and independent thought. His mother had in his childhood made him familiar

with the letter of the Scriptures. And now that the Master himself had in his experience taught him their spirit and their power, it is not to be wondered at that from the very first he proved a most acceptable expounder of Christian truth to the earnest-hearted but mostly uneducated people who composed his congregations. They were without a pastor: and, by a sort of unexpressed but mutual understanding, he became from that time forth their minister, until the time had passed which was required to close up his legal business. Meantime he had been a diligent student of the mysteries of the gospel. He felt that he had not time to read through the ponderous tomes of what are called systems of divinity. By the advice of Mr. Courtney, he took a shorter, if not a surer way to learn the truth. He knew that he was to teach the things which were contained in *one* Book. He made that Book his daily *study*. He not merely read, but *searched* the Scriptures daily. He selected *subjects* instead of texts as the basis of his discourses; and when he had chosen his subject, he took his concordance and gathered all the passages which were fitted to throw any light upon it. These texts he copied out upon a sheet of paper, so that he might have them all before him at a glance. He analyzed and classified them to get the distinctive meaning of each. Then he referred to several of the best commentators, and made his mind familiar with their exposition and criticisms, not on the single verse which was to be nominally the text of his discourse, but upon *all* the sometimes numerous passages connected with his subject. And when he felt that he had thus learned the teachings of the Holy Word, he was prepared to bring forth his treasures from an abundant storehouse, not crammed with "learned *lumber* of the brain," but full of things useful to the edifying of those who wished to know what the Master teaches in his Word. Thus he studied, and thus he preached;

and God was pleased to bless his ministry, from the very first, to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the comforting and building up of the saints.

About the time he closed his business, and was prepared to give himself *entirely* to the work of the gospel, he received a call from a church in one of the growing little cities of the South-west, and was ordained as their elder, or bishop, and pastor. In the intensity of his early zeal, he had overtasked his powers and undermined his health; and, at the earnest solicitation of his people, had left them for a few weeks, to recuperate his falling strength by a visit to the hill country of Tennessee.

THIRD DAY'S TRAVEL.

In ~~fact~~ the precise difference which exists between the kingdom of Christ and the Church of Christ is still further developed, and some other remarkable things concerning the Church are brought to light.

WHEN the company had assembled the next morning, the Doctor introduced the conversation thus :

"I think, sir, that you made a distinction yesterday between the *Church* of Christ and the *kingdom* of Christ, in such a way that you considered the Church as a *local* organization, established for a particular purpose *within* the kingdom—a part of the apparatus or machinery of the kingdom, if I may speak so."

"You did not far mistake my meaning," replied Mr. Courtney; "but as this idea is fundamental to the object which we have before us to-day, let me explain a little more particularly.

"We have seen that 'The kingdom of Christ,' 'The kingdom of God,' and 'The kingdom of Heaven,' as employed in the New Testament, are synonymous terms, and are used to designate that institution which was set up by Christ while he was upon the earth. It was not the Jewish kingdom, for the Jewish prophets told of it as something yet to come. It was not in being yet when Christ appeared, for he dated it from the preaching of John. It was *then* that the time was

fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was set up. *This kingdom was that economy of separation or assortment into which the penitent and the believing who trusted in Jesus as Messiah the Saviour were introduced by baptism according to Christ's appointment.*

“Those coming out from the mass, (whether Jews or Gentiles,) and openly, by their own act, acknowledging him before the world in that significant rite which he had instituted for the purpose, became his *visible people*. They put on his livery; were called by his name; became obedient to his laws; and he was thus, in sight of all the world, their Lord and King. Now this kingdom was to continue to the end of time, and to extend to all the world. Whenever and wherever any one should be found repenting of sin, and trusting in Christ for salvation, he was prepared to become a subject of this kingdom. It was proper that he should be baptized, and thus become formally united with those of whom the kingdom should consist. He was already a subject in his heart, and was prepared to become one, at his own request, in fact and in form. But without some such a formal recognition of the incoming members, there would be no *visible* distinction between *his* people and the people of the *world*. Some form was needful, and the King appointed *this*. BAPTISM IS, THEREFORE, THE DOOR OF ENTRANCE INTO HIS VISIBLE KINGDOM. *Those who have not entered by this door are not members of it.* They may be *pious*: they may be *penitent*: they may be *believers*: they may be the friends of the King: they may even be favorites of the King; but until they have openly put on Christ, and *acknowledged* him before the world, (not in such a way as *they* may think proper, but in the way of HIS appointment,) they are not and should not be regarded as belonging to *his* VISIBLE kingdom. To be a member of the Jewish kingdom, one must not only be a man free from certain defects and blemishes, and a worshipper of

Israel's God, but he must also be circumcised; so, to be a member of this new kingdom, one must not only repent and believe, but he must also be baptized. The condition is imperative and unconditional. There is no exception, and no room for evasion. Don't misunderstand me. I don't say that baptism is essential to *salvation*: THAT depends on penitence and faith; but baptism *is essential* to membership in *Christ's visible kingdom upon the earth*.

"The visible kingdom of Christ, therefore, (which is that we have been talking of,) *consists of all those who have openly professed their penitence for sin and faith in Christ, and have then been baptized into his name, in accordance with his appointment*. It is composed of these; and it contains *no others*, simply because, according to the laws of the King, these are *the indispensable* requisites for membership.

"We now, I trust, understand what is meant by the kingdom, when spoken of as a *visible* organization; and if so, we are prepared to take another step, and learn what is meant, in the Scriptures, by the '*Church of Christ*.'

"Let me premise, however, that our English word church is a term of such various and doubtful meaning, as it is commonly employed, that we must define it before we use it, or else we shall soon find ourselves embarrassed and confused by it. You know that it sometimes means the *house* where people worship, and sometimes the people who worship in the house. Sometimes it is applied to a particular congregation of professed Christians, and sometimes to all who hold to a particular set of doctrines. Sometimes it applies to all of some particular persuasion in some designated country, as the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, or of the United States. Some writers use it to signify all those of every name or order who *profess* to believe in Christ; others limit it to the special organization in connection with which they happen to be living. It is therefore necessary for us, if we would ascertain

what the *Scriptures* mean when *they* use the word church, to go to *them* for its definition. Their use of it is definite, and easily understood: they clearly explain themselves. The Greek word is *ekklesia*. It occurs in the singular or plural number one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament; and is translated 'church,' in our version, in every place but three. To obtain a correct conception of its scriptural meaning, we must examine the passages where it occurs; but in doing this, we must not forget that it *had a meaning*, as distinct and as well settled as any other Greek word, before it was employed by Christ and his apostles; and, consequently, they must have had regard to its original signification when they employed and appropriated it. This is as true of *ekklesia* as it is of *baptisma*; and we must go to Greece for the fundamental idea which both the words contain. They were both purely Greek words; they originated among the Greeks, and their meaning was fixed by the usage of the Greek language."

"Please then tell us, Mr. Courtney, what was the Grecian usage in reference to this word. What did it mean as a Greek would have employed it, in speaking or writing to the Grecians?"

"You will understand it better," said he, "if I tell you first its origin. It was derived originally from another Greek word, '*ekkalein*,' which signified *to call out from*. Now, you know the government of the ancient cities of Greece was democratic; that is, it was exercised by the qualified citizens assembled in a lawful meeting, for the transaction of business. The meetings were called together by the town-crier, and hence were named '*ekklesia*,' the '*called out*;' that is, the assembly of qualified citizens called out from the mass of the population. The same idea, or one very similar to it, is contained in our English word *convocation*, when applied to an assembly called together for some specific purpose. The

Greek '*ekklesia*' consisted of certain individuals, who, when assembled and organized, constituted an official body for the transaction of such business as might come before them. It was not merely an assembly, but an *official* assembly, consisting of persons specifically qualified, and who had each his specific rights and duties as a member of the *ekklesia*. It was not every resident in the city who was, strictly speaking, a citizen; nor was it every citizen who was a member of the *ekklesia* to which was intrusted the management of public business; but the *ekklesia* were called out from the mass. The word was perhaps sometimes, though rarely, applied to ordinary and unofficial meetings. It seems to be so used in one case by Luke, (Acts xix. 32,) to designate the *irregular and riotous assembly* which rushed into the public hall called, in the Greek, the '*theatron*;' and the most part of whom knew not why they had come together. But a careful and critical examination of the whole context in the original shows that here, as elsewhere, its common and restricted meaning is preserved; for the word *ekklesia*, rendered assembly in the thirty-second verse, is not the same that is rendered '*people*,' in the twenty-sixth verse, nor that rendered '*the people*,' in the thirtieth; nor did it apply to the noisy rabble whom the town clerk (the recorder or presiding officer of the *ekklesia*) at last succeeded in appeasing, after they had been for two long hours screeching the praises of Diana. But when the riot began, and the city was aroused, the '*ekklesia*' probably rushed in haste, and in an *irregular manner*, to their place of meeting, the *theatron*. The populace entered with them; and the tumult was so great, that the *ekklesia* could not be properly organized: it was therefore confused and illegal. Hence the recorder says, in the thirty-ninth verse, after explaining that the *present* business belonged rather to the bench of Roman deputies than to them—'But if ye enquire concerning *other* matters it shall be determined in a

lawful (ekklesia) assembly; that is, in a regularly adjourned or regularly called meeting of the *ekklesia*; and then, in the fortieth verse, when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the *ekklesia*.

"These three are the only places in which the word, as used in the New Testament, is not translated church. Where it is rendered assembly; and commonly, at that time, it signified an *official* and *organized* assembly.

"It would have been better translated by *assembly* than by church, in Acts vii. 38, when Stephen is speaking of the rebellious Jews who rejected Moses and thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. It was 'an assembly in the wilderness'—perhaps an *organized*, official assembly—called together to transact the public business, or deliberate on the affairs of the nation; but it was no *Church of Christ*. Every assembly was not an *ekklesia*, nor was every *ekklesia* an *ekklesia* of Christ."

"I was just going to ask," said Mrs. Percy, "whether every religious assembly would not, according to your account of the matter, be called a Christian Church?"

"Have a little patience, madam. We have now seen the origin of the word, and the meaning which it had when Christ adopted it and applied it to his institution. It yet remains to see to what sort of an institution it was *that he applied it*. It must have been an *assembly*; and this assembly must have consisted of those chosen or *called* to a participation in its privileges, otherwise there would be an inappropriateness in the name, which signified the *called assembly*. The literal meaning, therefore, of the '*ekklesia* of Christ,' rendered in our Bible the '*Church of Christ*,' could be no other than the official, or called *assembly of Jesus Christ*. It was an *assembly of HIS people*, meeting in HIS name, and transacting business by HIS authority. Not some invisible abstraction, but an actual business-doing *assembly*, to whom an injured brother

might go and tell his grievance ; and whose decision in the case should be final and conclusive. (Matt. xviii. 15-18.)

“ Now, if you want to know the character and qualifications of the members of this official assembly of Jesus Christ : if you want to know whether they were converted or unconverted, baptized or unbaptized : whether they were men and women grown, or little puling babes, you have only to look at *the pattern* which was modelled by Christ himself ; and of which we have a description in the Acts of the Apostles, which, though brief, is so minute and comprehensive as not to leave any essential feature out of view.”

“ Please show us that description, Mr. Courtney. It is just what I have been looking for,” said Dr. Thinkwell.

“ Here is the most of it, sir, in the first few chapters. Luke begins this history by reminding his friend Theophilus that he had previously written to him, giving an account of all that Jesus did while he *remained upon the earth*. He tells him that Christ, after his resurrection, spent some forty days with the apostles, instructing them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ; and then, having charged them to remain together in Jerusalem till they should receive the promised influences of the Holy Spirit, he ascended up to heaven. After this, some ten days, until the feast of Pentecost, were spent in prayer by them, and the women and the brethren of the Lord, in a large upper-room, somewhere in the city. Some time during these ten days Peter stood up in the midst of the assembly and suggested an item of business. It seems that this assembly consisted of certain specified and recognized persons, who were known by *name*, and, most probably, regularly enrolled ; for ‘ the number of the *names* together was about one hundred and twenty.’ (15th verse.) These hundred and twenty, you will observe, were all *disciples* : ‘ Peter stood up in the midst of *the disciples*.’ They had, therefore, been taught ; and they were also *prayer*

ing people. They were men and women. They had all an equal voice in the business, for *they*' (not *Peter*) nominated the candidates; and, after prayer for heavenly guidance, they cast their 'lots,' and Matthias was elected.*

"Here we have the first account of one of these chosen assemblies regularly organized *and doing business* in the name of Christ. To these disciples, after the Spirit was poured out upon the day of Pentecost, three thousand more were added. How were they added? '*They gladly received the word, AND WERE BAPTIZED.*' After their baptism, '*they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers;*' '*and the Lord added daily to the ekklesia such as should be saved.*' In the fifth chapter we read that at the death of Ananias and Sapphira great fear came upon all *the ekklesia*. It was *this ekklesia*

* During the lifetime of Christ the *kingdom* was established, but *the Church*, as the *executive* of the kingdom, was not needful, for the King himself was present, and acted as his *own* executive. The apostles who were with him, receiving instructions, may be regarded as in some sort his *ekklesia*. They were an *assembly of his people*, and were engaged in the *preparatory* business pertaining to the kingdom. We may, without impropriety, therefore, consider the meetings of the apostles to receive the ordinances and laws of the kingdom from the mouth of Christ, as meetings of his *ekklesia*. We may consider the apostles as constituting a Church when they, after the passover, received the ordinance of the supper with instructions for its continuance; and so we may consider that as a Church meeting in which Thomas saw and believed; and that in which Peter was restored to favor and specially charged to feed Christ's sheep. And so each of those assemblies which gathered around the Saviour during the forty days that he remained upon the earth to receive instruction in the things pertaining to the kingdom, may be regarded as a Church meeting. We may consider the Church as *organized* from the time that Christ called the twelve to be with him; but it was not till he was about to ascend that it received *authority to transact the business of the kingdom, as his judiciary and executive.*

that from their own number chose the deacons to attend to the distribution of the provisions for the poor. It was this *ekklesia* in which prayer was made for Peter without ceasing when he was thrown into the prison. This *ekklesia*, in Acts viii 1, is more specifically designated as the '*ekklesia* which was at Jerusalem.' It was, therefore, a *local* and limited organization. It was *one* assembly, and no more. It was the first and oldest of the many Churches which were formed during the lifetime of the apostles. It was the Church in which they had their membership; and on these accounts its advice was sought, and its decisions regarded as of peculiar value, but *it never claimed any superiority* over the other Churches which were organized upon the same model and by the same authority.

"Here, then, is the embodiment of the scriptural idea of a Church of Jesus Christ. It is an assembly of those who have repented of sin, believed on Christ, and then have been baptized: who meet together in regular order to break the bread and drink the wine in his remembrance, and to transact business in his name.

"The Church at Jerusalem was no more a Church than was 'the Church at Antioch,' or 'the Church in Ephesus,' or 'the Church of God in Corinth,' or 'the Church of the Laodiceans.' Each of these was a separate, distinct, and independent organization. We find no record of such an 'establishment' as the Church of Judea; but we read of the 'Churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria:' so we read of 'the Churches of Macedonia,' 'the Churches of Galatia,' and 'the Churches of Asia.' There are no *national* Churches. There are no *provincial* Churches. There are no *branches* of the Church at Jerusalem, or any other Church. No Church is ever called a *part* of any other Church. Each *ekklesia* was complete in itself. It was the *assembly* which Christ had called out from the world, in the place where it

was located. It was, therefore, called the '*ekklesia*'—the assembly of Jesus Christ in such or such a place. It is this, and nothing more."

"I wish it were possible for us," said Mrs. Percy, "to turr at once to each place where the word is found and read it in its connection. I always feel more certain that I know the truth when I have examined into the matter *for myself*."

"It is not only possible, but very easy to gratify your desire, madam. I have a Greek concordance in my trunk, and we can in a few minutes find every single passage in which the word *ekklesia* occurs."

He went to his state-room, and presently returned with the convenient volume.

"Now," said he, "take the Bible, and find the places as I point them out. But first, I will remark that I have been over this ground more than once before this, and can, therefore, suggest a classification of these passages which will assist us in our endeavor to arrive at the strict and actual signification of the word, as it is used by the New Testament writers. For instance, it is used three times, Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, in reference to the *assembly* which gathered in the city of Ephesus, about the matter of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen. These places we have already seen. It means here simply a secular assembly, and has no sort of reference to a religious institution. Then it occurs twice where it refers to a *Jewish* assembly—first in Acts vii. 38, where Stephen informs the Jews that Moses was in the '*ekklesia*' in the wilderness with the angel that spake unto him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us. That '*ekklesia*,' however, was not *Christ's* *ekklesia*. It was composed of those 'who would not obey:' (verse 39 :) who 'made a calf and worshipped it:' (verse 41 :) whom 'God turned from and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven;' (verse 42 ;) and who were just such rebels

as the persecutors whom Stephen was then addressing; for in verse 51, he says: 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: *as your fathers did, so do ye.*' The other passage in which it refers to a Jewish assembly is Hebrews ii. 12: 'In the midst of the church will I sing praise of thee.' This is merely a quotation from Psalm xxii. 22, where it is rendered *congregation* 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.'

"We have now one hundred and ten places remaining in which the word refers in some sense to the Christian institution. In most of these you will find it signifies literally and unequivocally a *local assembly of Christ's disciples*, such as we have seen exemplified in the 'Church which was at Jerusalem.' The first two of these are in Matthew xviii. 17: 'If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto *the Church*; but if he neglect to hear *the Church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' This was a local body. If it had not been, the aggrieved disciple could not know where to find it, or how to address it. The offender was a brother, and the two or three whom he should take for witnesses were also brethren in this Church. Here is the first and fundamental law of Church authority and discipline. The brethren were to live together in love and harmony; but if one felt himself aggrieved, he should first go and try the effect of a personal interview: if this should fail to restore a right state of feeling, take two or three of the brethren and talk the matter over in their presence. If this should fail, then he should call the matter up before the *ekklesia*—the body of disciples *assembled* in their official capacity, to transact business in the name of Christ—and from their decision there should be no appeal. That such was the understanding of the apostles, and such the practice of the Churches founded by them, we will see before we have gone through with all these texts. It will be manifest that it was *the Church*, ('the

ekklesia,') the *local* society of Christians *assembled* for business, not a 'session,' or 'consistory,' or 'presbytery,' or 'synod,' or 'conference,' much less a 'class-leader,' or 'preacher,' 'deacon,' 'elder,' 'priest,' or 'bishop,' to whom this power was intrusted, and by whom it was exercised. But let us go on. You will find in the next place Acts ii. 47, that the first Church was already organized, and 'the Lord was adding to it daily such as should be saved.' This was the local body, the number of the names in which was a few days before, about one hundred and twenty; but to which three thousand had been added on the day of Pentecost, and which continued to hold daily meetings in the temple, and from house to house, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

"In the next place, Acts v. 11, we read that when Peter had so signally punished the wicked covetousness and falsehood of Ananias and his wife, 'Great fear came upon all *the Church*, and upon as many as heard these things.' And the next time it is mentioned, Acts viii. 1, even before any other similar society is organized, as if to show at once and for ever that each *ekklesia* was to be separate and distinct from every other as being complete within itself, this Church is specifically designated as the 'Church which was at Jerusalem.' At that time there was a great persecution against the 'Church which was at Jerusalem.' And then in the third verse, 'As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church:' that is, the Church at Jerusalem, for he had not yet gone to Damascus, or left the city of Jerusalem.

"Now turn to the next chapter, Acts ix. 31, and you will see this idea further developed. The 'Church which was at Jerusalem' no longer stood alone. It was no longer *the Church*. It was the *first Church*. It was the *model Church*. It was that in which the idea of Christ, when he spake of his Church, was first actually embodied and exemplified. It was

the pattern after which other churches were to be fashioned and to which in every essential particular they must conform. But it was not the *only* Church: it was one of a multitude, for here we read, 'Then had the *Churches* rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.'

"This is remarkable. We do not read that the Church of Jerusalem had extended herself, and had become the *Church of Judea*, or the *Church of Galilee*, or the *Church of Samaria*. Neither here nor anywhere do we read of a *territorial* or a *provincial* Church. Nowhere is there a word about any great 'establishment,' comprising in its limits a multitude of local societies, and called '*the Church*,' like the Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Lutheran Church, etc. Each local organization was a Church complete within itself. Each was as much a Church as any other. Each was independent of all others. But this fact will be still more manifest as we proceed. The next place is Acts xi. 22, where the Church in Jerusalem is again specially designated: When tidings of these things came to the ears of *the Church which was in Jerusalem*, they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

"Barnabas went first to Tarsus, Paul's native city; and when he had found the new disciple, he brought him on to Antioch; and for a whole year you read (verse 26) that these two men 'assembled with *the Church* in that city, and taught much people.' This Church appears to have been a missionary Church as well as that at Jerusalem; for after Paul and Barnabas had preached to them a year or so, they sent them away to found new churches in other places, as you may see in the thirteenth chapter. But the next place where the word Church (*ekklesia*) occurs is the first verse of the twelfth chapter, where the history returns to the 'Church

which was at Jerusalem,' and informs us that Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of *the Church*, and killed James and imprisoned Peter; and in the fifth verse, that 'Prayer was made without ceasing *in the Church* unto God for him.' This does not mean in the *building* or edifice in which they met for worship, for history informs us that the Christians *had no such buildings* for some two hundred years after this, but continued to meet from house to house, or in the Jewish synagogues, or wherever they might. And the word (*ekklesia*) is *never* used in the New Testament, or any other Greek book written before or during the time of the apostles, to signify a house or building. Prayer was made in the *assembly of the disciples*. This was Christ's Church which was at Jerusalem.

"The history then goes back to Antioch, and we read of '*the Church that was in Antioch*,' as we have several times read of '*the Church that was in Jerusalem*.' There were prophets in this Church, and the Church recognized their authority, and acted in accordance with their instructions, and sent out Paul and Barnabas on a missionary tour. They went as far as Derbe, and then returned over the ground they had passed, 'confirming the souls of the disciples' they had made, 'exhorting them to continue in the faith;' 'and when they had ordained them elders (Acts xiv. 23) *in every Church*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.' Then after a time they came again to Antioch, and reported their work. They gathered *the Church* together (verse 27) and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

"But when certain Jews came to Antioch and taught that the Gentile brethren must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, Paul and Barnabas had much controversy with them, and it was determined to have the opinion of the

apostles and elders, who, having the spirit of inspiration, were able to decide the question authoritatively, and that for this purpose Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem. They were brought on their way by *the Church* at Antioch, (verse 3,) and were joyfully received by the *Church at Jerusalem*, (verse 4,) and by the apostles and elders. When the apostles and elders came together to consider of the business, it seems that it was in a great Church meeting, for (verse 12) *all the multitude* kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And when they had finished their narrative, James made a short speech about the business in hand, and then (verse 22) we read that it pleased the apostles and elders, with *the whole (ekklesia) Church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

“That was a wise precaution; for as Paul and Barnabas were known to be bitter opponents of the Judaizing teachers, those men might say, in the absence of such witnesses, that they had perverted or misrepresented the decision of the apostles and elders.”

“But, my dear sir,” said Dr. Thinkwell, “do you not see in the very fact that Antioch sent to Jerusalem about this matter, a recognition of the superior authority of the Church at Jerusalem? This fact alone must for ever set aside your theory of Church independence. Antioch brethren disagree: the contention grows so strong that it is like to distract and divide the Church. They do not decide for themselves, but send to a distant city to *another Church*, and ask it to determine for them. Now what possible necessity for this if the Church at Antioch was entirely the equal of the Church at Jerusalem, and just as competent to decide upon any question of faith or practice?”

“Read the twenty-fourth verse, Doctor, and you will see

one reason, if not the only reason, why Antioch asked or why Jerusalem gave the advice: 'Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out *from us* have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, and saying that ye must be circumcised and keep the law; *to whom WE gave no such commandment.*' These teachers had come *from Jerusalem*. They had been members of the *Jerusalem Church*. They claimed to speak by the *authority of the apostles*, and doubtless to conform to the practice of *that Church*, which, as we have already seen, was the *model* by which others were to be fashioned.

"Nothing could be more natural and proper, therefore, than to send to Jerusalem to inquire *if these things were so? had the apostles so decreed? was this the custom of that Church?* But besides this, you will observe that although the apostles and elders associated the whole Church which was at Jerusalem with them in their consultations and in their letter, yet the Church at Antioch did *not* send to the *Church* at Jerusalem, but to the '*apostles and elders,*' (verse 2.) The apostles were everywhere recognized as speaking by Divine authority, and as fully authorized by Christ to set in order all things relating to his kingdom. The *apostles* had the power without the elders and without the Church. Any *one* of them had the power without the advice or authority of the others to decide such questions as these, and it was *their* decision that was asked for. But to show how little they were like *modern bishops*—how careful they were to shun even the appearance of lording it over God's heritage—they called the brethren of their own Church into their council, and issued their decision not only in their own name, but in that of the brethren, taking care, however, to rest *its binding force* upon the fact that it seemed good to the *L'ly Ghost* and to *us* (verse 28) to lay on you no greater burden than these *necessary things, etc.*"

"I see, sir, that you are correct. Go on with the texts."

"You will find the next one, Mrs. Percy, in the last verse (41st) of this same chapter: 'He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the *Churches*.' In the 4th verse of the next chapter, (xvi.,) you have some further light upon this decision of the apostles. It is there distinctly recognized, not as the decrees of the *Church* at Jerusalem, but of the *apostles and elders* which were at Jerusalem. In the 5th, you learn that *the Churches* were established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

"From Acts xviii. 22, we learn that there was a *Church* at Cæsarea. Paul landed there, went up and saluted *the Church*, and then went on to Antioch. From Acts xx. 17, we learn that Paul sent to Ephesus while he was at Miletus, and called together the elders of *the Church*, whom he addressed in that most pathetic and sublime speech of which the 28th verse is a part: 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (literally *bishops*,) to feed *the Church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' This Church must have been the Church at Ephesus, as that was the only flock of which they could be considered as the shepherds or overseers. There is no other place where the word occurs in the Acts of the Apostles; so you may now turn to Romans xvi., where, in the 1st verse, Phœbe is called a sister, and the servant of *the Church* which is at Cenchrea. In the 4th verse, Paul speaks of '*all the Churches* of the Gentiles.' In the 5th, of *the Church* that is in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. In the 16th, he says the *Churches of Christ* give salutation to the Roman Christians; and in the 22d, he calls Gaius not only *his* host, but that of the *whole Church*, by which I suppose he means either that his house was open to every Church member who would visit him; or, more probably, that the '*ekklesia*' met at his house for worship and business."

"Dear me!" exclaimed a lady, with a sigh, "I hope you are nearly through with this long catalogue of texts. I am getting heartily tired of hearing the same thing over and over again; and I am sure, if your object was to show that a scriptural Church was a *local and independent corporation*, you have proved it more than twenty times. Why shall we not take that point as fixed and settled, and go on to something else?"

"O no," replied Mrs. Percy, "I am greatly interested in this. I have never before made a careful examination of what really is the scriptural idea contained in this word; and as a consequence, my mind has been confused when thinking or speaking or reading about it. It is true, we have now *one* of the ideas; but it yet remains to be seen if we have them *all*. The word is used in *many* places in this sense; but is it not used in *some* places in some *other* sense? I cannot be *certain* about it till we have examined *every place*; and I am sure it will save time and trouble in our future study to get this lesson perfectly while it is before us. So, Mr. Courtney, please tell us the next place."

"It is in the 1st verse of the first chapter of First Corinthians; and as your friend seems anxious to get through with this dry business as fast as possible, we may group with this a number of others of the same sort. It is the address or direction, so to speak, of this letter to the Corinthians: 'To the Church (*ekklesia*) of God which is at Corinth.' The address of the second letter is in the same style. That to the Galatians is addressed to the *Churches* of Galatia; and those to the Thessalonians are addressed to *the Church* of the Thessalonians. This, you see, disposes of five places at a word. In the fourth chapter of First Corinthians, 17th verse, Paul says he has sent Timothy to bring to their remembrance *his ways* which are in Christ, as he teaches everywhere in *every* ('*ekklesia*') Church. In the sixth chapter, 4th verse, he tells

them that it would be better to set the least esteemed members of *the Church* to arbitrate worldly matters, than to go to law before unbelievers: seventh chapter, 17th verse, is the conclusion of his directions about living with unbelieving consorts, at the close of which he says that this is what he ordains in *all the Churches*: tenth chapter, 32d verse, 'Give no offence to the Jews or to the Gentiles, or to *the Church of God*:' eleventh chapter, 16th verse, 'We have no such custom, neither *the Churches of God*;' 18th verse, 'When ye come together in the *Church (ekklesia)* there be divisions among you;' 22d verse, 'What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the *ekklesia of God*, and shame them that have not?' twelfth chapter, 28th verse, 'God hath set in the *ekklesia*, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets,' etc.: fourteenth chapter, 4th and 5th verses, 'He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth *himself*, but he that prophesieth edifieth *the Church (ekklesia)*. Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret that *the Church* may receive edifying;' 12th verse, 'Seek ye that ye may excel, to the edifying of *the Church*;' 19th verse, 'In *the Church* I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than with my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue;' 23d verse, 'If therefore the *whole Church* come together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in the unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?' 28th verse, 'If there be no interpreter, let him (the speaker in an unknown tongue) keep silence in the *ekklesia*; but let him speak to himself and to God;' 33d verse, 'For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in *all Churches of the saints*;' 35th verse, 'If they (the women) will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the (*ekklesia*) *Church*.' In the sixteenth chapter, 1st verse, Paul mentions the *Churches of Galatia*; and in the

nineteenth, the *Churches* of Asia, and the *Church* in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, before alluded to.

“Now, passing over the address of the Second Epistle, turn to the eighth chapter, where, after mention of the *Churches* of Macedonia in the first verse, we read, in the 18th and 19th verses, of one whose praise was in *all the Churches*, and who was chosen *by the Churches* to travel with Paul; and in the 23d verse, of ‘our brethren the messengers of the *Churches*,’ before whom and the *Churches* the Corinthians are exhorted, in the 24th verse, to show evidence of their love. In the 8th verse of the eleventh chapter, the apostle says, ‘I robbed *other Churches*, taking wages of *them* to do you service;’ and after enumerating some of his trials, afflictions, persecutions, and troubles, he adds, in the 28th verse, ‘and besides all this, there cometh upon me the care (not of the *whole Church*, you will observe, but) of *all the Churches*.’ In the next chapter, 13th verse, he asks the Corinthians wherein they were inferior to *other Churches*, except in this, that he was not burdensome to them. In Gal. i. 22, mention is made again of the *Churches which were in Judea*. He tells the Philippians, iv. 15, that *no Church*, on a certain occasion, communicated with him in giving and receiving but themselves; and in Col. iv. 15, 16, we read of the *Church* in the house of Nymphas, and the *Church* of the Laodiceans. In Thess. ii. 14, mention is made again of the *Churches* of God in Judea. In 2 Thess. iv. 4, Paul declares that he glories or boasts of the Thessalonians in the *Churches of God*.

“You see, madam,” addressing the unknown lady, “we are getting through with them very rapidly now, and will soon complete the list.”

“O, sir, I am not at all impatient; and indeed, since Mrs Percy’s explanation of the object in view, I am as deeply interested as any of you can be; so pray do not omit a single

place on my account, nor pass by any carelessly. Let us be sure that we know not only the common meaning, but *all the meanings* which the word has in the Scriptures, whatever time and trouble may be needful for that purpose."

"Turn, then, to 1 Tim. iii. 5, where Paul is describing the character of a bishop or pastor as one who rules well in his own house; 'for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the *ekklesia* of God?' If he could not govern his own family, it might be taken for granted that he would be unfit to preside in the *ekklesia*, and take the care of souls."

"Excuse me," said the Doctor; "I thought a *bishop* was one who had the care of a *diocese* including a number of churches."

"That is the case with modern bishops; but when we come to examine into the nature of the *offices* established in the first Churches by Christ and the apostles, we will find no such bishops as you are thinking of. A New Testament bishop was simply and only *the pastor of a single church*. But let that pass for the present; we will bring it up again.

"The next place is in 1 Tim. iii. 15: 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is *the Church* of the living God.' The word here rendered *house* does not mean a building, but it is the same which in 1 Cor. i. 16 is translated *household* or *family*. 'I baptized also the household of Stephanas,' etc. The brethren and sisters in each Church are spoken of as a family, of whom God is the Father and the Head. In the fifth chapter and 16th verse, Paul charges that Church members having widows dependent on them should take care of them, and not throw them upon *the Church* for support.

"In the next passage, second verse of Philemon, we read of the Church that was in this beloved brother's house. James, in his Epistle, v. 14, says: 'If any is sick, let him call for the

elders of *the Church*.' And John, in the third Epistle, addressed to the well-beloved Gaius, probably the same of whom Paul speaks as his host, and that of the church, says that brethren and strangers have borne witness of his charity before *the church*; (verse 6;) and informs him that he (John) had written a letter to *the church*, but that a certain Diotrophes prevented it from being received, and (verse 10) cast certain out of the church, who would receive the brethren by whom he sent it.

"We come now to the last book of the record; and, on some accounts, the most important one in regard to its testimony on this subject, as it shows what the churches *were* in the last days of which we have any inspired history, and foretells what should befall them in the ages that should follow.

"In Revelation i. 4, 11, 20, you find that they were not yet combined into a diocese, or any ecclesiastical 'establishment.' It was not to the Church in general, nor to the Church of Asia, but to 'the seven Churches which are in Asia,' that he addressed his words. In the second and third chapters he addresses successively each of these seven Churches by name, and again and again calls upon those who have ears, to hear what the Spirit saith unto *the Churches*. Rev. ii. 1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 29. In the twenty-third verse he says, 'And *all the Churches* shall know that I am he that searches the reins,' etc. The third chapter, 1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22, are, like those passages in the second, all mere forms of address—to the angel of *the Church* in Sardis, and the like, and repetitions of the phrase, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto *the Churches*.' And then, to crown the whole, in the last chapter (verse 16) you may read, 'I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things unto you in *the Churches*.'

"We have now seen and examined near a hundred of the hundred and fifteen places where the word *ekklesia* occurs

In all these I think it is very generally conceded that it is employed (where it refers to the Christian institution at all) in a limited and specific sense to denote *one local and independent organized body or assembly of Christian people*. We will now look at some in which it has commonly been thought to have reference to the whole multitude of the Churches viewed collectively, as though they were a single Church, which might with propriety be called the *universal Church*, or, in the language of the creed, 'the holy Catholic Church;' and we will see, by a careful examination of them, passage by passage, that there is *no such idea* contained in any one of them. The writers had in their minds no such conception, and their words mean nothing of the sort."

"Surely, my dear sir," said Mr. Percy, "you must labor under some mistake in regard to this; for, if I am not misinformed, it has been almost universally conceded by Baptists as well as others, that in some *few* places 'the Church' is certainly employed as synonymous with 'the kingdom,' and refers to *all* the Churches of Christ, in every age and nation, considered as one vast united organization: that body of which Christ was the head: that great assembly for which he gave himself, to redeem it unto God. Do not even our own best scholars and critics take this for granted?"

"What if they do, my friend? It does not follow that *we* must take it for granted too. We are making an independent examination for *ourselves*, in order to learn what is the scriptural meaning of the word *ekklesia*, rendered in our version *Church*. We do not ask what this man or that man has thought it to mean: we go *for ourselves* to the fountain-head. We travel back to Greece, before our Saviour's day, and see in what sense the word was used in the language to which it belonged before it was taken up by the Master and appropriated to his institution. We turn to the Septuagint to see in what sense it was used by the Jews. We have

found that the Greeks used it to signify a select or called assembly: perhaps we may admit that they sometimes used it to designate *any kind* of an assembly. So in those places where the Jews employed it in their Septuagint, we find the same sense: Deut. xviii. 16, 'In the day of the *assembly*,' and Ps. xxii. 22, 'In the midst of the *congregation*.' We must consequently *bring this sense with us when we come to the New Testament*. The ekklesia of Christ is the *select* and *called* assembly, or, at least, it is the *assembly* of Christ—that assembly which was authorized and organized by him for certain purposes, which he has specifically set forth in his instructions to his people of whom it should be composed. Christ found the word with its meaning already fixed. The meaning was suited to his purpose, and he therefore took it and appropriated it to *his institution*. By the appropriation it did not lose its original signification: its meaning was not changed. It was because it *had* that very meaning that Christ selected it and applied it to his organization. It meant an assembly before he appropriated it, and it meant an assembly afterwards; but then it was a *peculiar* assembly—it was *his* assembly—the assembly of Christ and of God; and now after it was thus applied—after it had been thus *appropriated* by Christ, it would, when used by him, or in reference to his kingdom, have this new and appropriated meaning. The ekklesia would be the sacred assembly of Jesus Christ: it would be no common convocation, but only that *official* assembly which was convened by *his* authority, organized according to *his* plan, for such objects as *he* had designated, and transacting business in *his* name. That he *did* authorize and organize a religious institution, (either by himself or his apostles,) that he gave to it a constitution and laws, that he charged it with the duty of making known his gospel, that he left to it the administration of his ordinances and the execution of his laws, is universally admitted. This institu

tion he called *his ekklesia*—his Church. You ask me what this institution *was*—of what did it consist? How can I answer your question so clearly, so easily, and so satisfactorily as to point you to the institution itself as it actually existed after it had been organized and was in the full tide of successful operation under the very eyes of those whom he had *personally instructed* and *divinely inspired* to superintend its workings. I carry you to Jerusalem. I show you the institution as there exemplified and illustrated by the actual organization. I introduce you into “the Church” as it was first established in the city where Christ was crucified, and from the suburbs of which he ascended to glory. The apostles and the elders whom he had instructed with his own mouth are members of it; and upon them there he first sends down his Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all that he has taught them. *This organization was his ekklesia. This was of necessity the visible embodiment of his idea. This must have been just what he meant and all that he meant by his ekklesia.* Christ in his lifetime had more than once spoken of his Church; and when *this* body was fairly organized, Luke, speaking by inspiration, says *it was the Church.*

“Now, if this Church had, under the direction of Christ or his apostles, spread itself out and embraced within its limits other local organizations or religious societies, and made them *subordinate* to and *dependent upon* itself, we must have recognized Christ’s ekklesia as some great central establishment like the Church of Rome, holding the multitude of the local congregations in a state of dependence and subjection. If this Church, under the direction of Christ or the apostles, had included within its jurisdiction all the Christians in Judea, we might have regarded the ekklesia of Christ as a national establishment. If it had subjected itself to the control of any other or to all the other local organizations it

such a way as to secure *mutual* dependence, and a subordination of one to the whole, or to a majority of the whole, we might have fancied that the Church of Christ consisted of *all* the local societies thus mutually subordinated. But we find nothing of the kind. This Church *never* subjected any other to itself, and never subjected itself to any other. It never included any other within its limits, nor became included in the limits of any other. It was 'the Church which was at Jerusalem,' and nothing more or less. It never became the Church of Judea. But it was surrounded by '*the Churches which were in Judea*,' each of them as independent, each of them *as much a Church*, as it was itself. It stood isolated and independent, acknowledging subjection to none but Christ, as he had spoken in his word, or might speak through his Spirit. When other Churches were formed at Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Colosse, each of them was as independent and complete within itself as this one was. This was the model after which they all were fashioned. What, then, do we find the Church of Christ actually to have been? Simply a *local assembly of baptized believers, meeting by his authority to administer his ordinances, and transact the business of his kingdom in his name*. This we have ascertained, not from any chance *allusions*, not from any dark and metaphorical expressions. We have not been left to *infer* it from some *figure of speech*, but have seen it as an *actual* and working existence. And now, I say, what has been thus settled by *facts* cannot be *unsettled* by *fancies*. And so even if we should find some faint allusion, or some metaphorical expression which seems to refer to something else than this, and altogether different from this as though it were the ekklesia of Christ, we shall not abandon the open sunlight and the solid ground of inspired and undisputed historical *facts*, to follow off some *ignis fatuus* into the quagmires of metaphors, and similes, and figures of speech

I say, there was no such thing intended by Christ as a provincial Church, or a national Church, or a Church universal, simply because I cannot find any *history* of such a Church in the Bible. I read of 'the Churches of Judea,' and of 'the Churches of Galilee,' and of 'the Churches of Samaria,' and of 'the Churches of Galatia,' and of 'the Churches of Asia,' but not one word about the *establishment* which embraced them all, or any number of them all. I say, therefore, that no such establishment existed. If anybody says *it did*, it devolves on him to *prove* it, and that not from tradition—(we all know tradition is a gray-headed liar; and for myself, I won't believe a word he says, unless sustained by other testimony)—let him prove it from *this book*, which we all agree contains all that is needful for our religious faith and practice. I will be guided by and governed by the Bible. I am willing to take the Bible, and the whole Bible, with *every word truly and fairly translated*; but I will have nothing but the Bible. Christ is my only lawgiver in religion; and what law he did not make I am under no religious obligation to obey."

"But, Mr. Courtney," said the strange lady, "let me ask you if the advocates of provincial, and national, and other associated Churches do not present some texts of Scripture on which they rest their claim. I have heard so often of the Holy Catholic Church, Church militant and the Church triumphant, of the Church on earth and the Church in glory, of the ancient Church, of the apostolic Church, and of the Church universal, that I am sure there must be *some* Scripture for such phrases."

"You have heard many things for Scripture, madam, which nobody can find in the Bible. Not one of these phrases is there. They are all mere human fancies—very pretty, and in a certain sense sufficiently true; but in the strict and literal *Bible sense* of the word 'Church,' there is no such thing as a Church, except it be a simple local assembly or congregation

of believers, organized according to Christ's requirements, and for the specific purposes which he intended. *The Church of Christ is simply the visible judiciary and executive in his visible kingdom.*"

"But you don't deny that there is such a thing as the Church invisible, as well as the Church visible."

"You can conceive, madam, of a great ideal *invisible* RE-PUBLIC embracing all those who in every age and country have hated kings and kingcraft, and have longed for freedom. It is not a thing that *exists*. It never *has* existed. Yet you can *think* about it; you can *talk* about it; orators can make speeches about it; poets can write songs about it; and it might come to occupy a place in our minds and in our language, as though it were an actual reality. So I can conceive of an invisible 'assembly' of Jesus Christ, comprising all who in their hearts have loved him, and obeyed him in their lives, so far as they could understand his will. We can talk of such an assembly, and sing what a glorious and happy convocation it would be, but *here* upon the earth no such assembly has ever existed, or ever will exist. What may take place in heaven is another matter. Our friend, the Doctor, is looking for the Church of Christ *on earth*. He wants to *join* it. And *this* Church is a *visible* assembly. Our question is, whether it is a *local* independent assembly, containing within itself all that is requisite to constitute it a complete Church of Jesus Christ, or whether it is a *part* of some great visible organization to which it is subordinate and accountable. If it *be* a local independent body, then it must follow, of course, that those extensive *combinations* which are called Churches, such as the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, and the like, *are not and cannot be* Churches of Jesus Christ; for they are not such local and independent organizations, but vast combinations of mutually dependent

and subordinate societies. I say the Church of Christ *is not* any such combination, whether that combination includes a *part*, or whether it includes *the whole* of the professed disciples of Christ that are in any country, or that are in all the world, because *the Church as we find it in this book was not a combination of any Churches*, either more or less, but *each Church was complete in itself, and independent of all others.*"

"I know very well," said Mr. Percy, "that no *partial* combinations are recognized as Churches in the Word; that there is, for instance, no such thing as the union of all the religious societies in any country, or province, or empire; nor any union of all holding a particular set of doctrines, as the Methodist or Presbyterian Churches; but is it equally certain that there is no such union spoken of as *existing between all the Churches*, and binding them into one great UNIVERSAL CHURCH! I had regarded it as a fact conceded by all the authorities that there was *such a Church*, commonly called the '*Church universal.*'"

"I recognize no authorities," said Mr. Courtney, "but the writers of the New Testament, and I know of no place where they have conceded any thing of the kind. It may be that there are some *metaphorical allusions* to such an *imaginary* or *ideal Church*. As the believers in any one place assemble and constitute an actual and visible Church, so we can well conceive of all the believers in the world *as though they were assembled* in one immense congregation, and might very properly call this ideal assembly the universal Church; but though we can conceive of it, and speak of it thus, no such universal assembly exists, or has existed, or ever will exist upon the earth. So that however numerous and plain such allusions might be, they could have no possible bearing upon the *actual* organization of the real and visible Church. *That is no universal Church. It cannot be.* Let us for a moment suppose this universal Church to be an *actual exist-*

ence. *It is.* Where is it? What is it? If it exist at all, it is the Church of Rome. She is the only body that *claims* to be in herself the Holy Catholic or universal Church, and to include, within herself alone, *all* the redeemed. The Church of England makes no such claim outside her queen's dominions. The Methodist Church North or the Methodist Church South makes no such claim. The Presbyterian Old School or New School makes no such claim. They only plead that they are *parts* of it, branches of it. But where and what is the *whole*? As I said before, it is something which can be *conceived of*, can be *talked about*, and *quarrelled over*, but it has only an *ideal*, that is, an *imaginary* existence. As a real and actual visible organization, there is not now, and since the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem, and went everywhere preaching the word and founding Churches in every place, there never has been any thing of the sort; and if we suppose any passages of Scripture to refer to any such thing, we must suppose them to refer to a nonentity."

"But why not let us have the passages at once, that we may judge for ourselves?" asked the Doctor.

"Certainly, sir, I ask pardon, I know I have talked too long. Mr. Percy seems to think that he can find this 'Church universal:' perhaps he will do us the kindness to point us to the texts which he thinks teach its existence."

"I acknowledge, sir," said Mr. Percy, "that I have not investigated this point. I had taken it for granted. I was not aware that anybody questioned it. But suppose we turn to Matthew xvi. 18: 'On this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

"This is the first place," said Mr. Courtney, "in which the word *ekklesia* occurs in the New Testament. The question before us is, What did Christ mean by it? What *was* it that he said he would build? How can we ascertain?"

"Very easily, I should think," said Theodosia; "we have only to look *when he had done it*, and see what he *did build*. That we have done already, in almost a hundred of the different places where it is referred to, and have found it invariably to mean a *local and independent assembly*."

"It does not seem so easy to me," returned Mr. Percy, "for there are to my mind at least two very serious difficulties in the way of that interpretation. One is, that Christ uses the term my Church in such a general way that it can hardly be limited to any particular individual body. He does not say, I will build my Churches each one by itself, but my Church in general. The other is, that this Church, whatever it might be, was to be *perpetual*. The gates of hell should not prevail against it. But this could not be true of any one local organization. *They* are continually falling. The first Churches have long ago vanished from the earth, and Satan has reigned with undisputed sway in the very cities where the apostles themselves were instruments to build them. Christ must, therefore, have designed to speak of some more extensive and more permanent organization."

"Very good," replied Mr. Courtney, "I love to meet objections, and will examine your last one first. You say that this Church must have been a perpetual organization, since the gates of hell should not prevail against it. But no local organization has been perpetual; therefore, it could not have been any local organization, but something more permanent, that Christ intended. Your logic is good, and you have, of course, some knowledge of the more permanent organization to which he must have referred. Can you tell me what it was? It was a *visible organization founded by Christ*, and which *has continued* to the present time. It is not the Methodist Church, for that was founded by John Wesley. It is not the Presbyterian, for that was founded by John Calvin. It was not the modern English, for that be-

gan with King Henry the Eighth. It was not the Roman Catholic, for that is Antichrist."

"Of course," replied Mr. Percy, "no Baptist pretends that it was any of these. It was the 'Church universal.' It consisted of *all* the *true* Churches of Christ, viewed collectively as one great united organization."

"If the thing you are speaking of, Mr. Percy, was a mere *ideal* organization, something *conceivable*, but not existing as a *reality*, we have nothing to do with it; but if you mean that there was an *actual* and *visible* organization established by Christ, and which included in one Church *all* the members of all his Churches, you can doubtless produce some record of its sayings or doings. We have very particular accounts of the acts of the Church at Jerusalem, and of that at Antioch, and of some others, and surely we must have some history of this general Church. When did it meet? What were its powers? What business came before it? We have searched carefully, and have found nothing of it. It surely did not exist in the lifetime of the apostles. The Churches which *they* founded continued separate and independent. They were never amalgamated into one great central organization; or if they were, not only has the organization been destroyed, but even the record of it has perished."

"I confess, sir, that I had no very clear conception in my mind as to what it was that the Saviour said he would build, and since he did not build any universal *visible* Church, I suppose it must have been his *invisible* Church that he referred to."

"But the language will hardly apply to any thing invisible and ideal. A building is a *visible* and *tangible* object, and the reference must have been to some actual and visible organization."

"How, then, do you get round the difficulty, Mr. Courtney?"

"I don't go round it at all. I simply set it out of my way, thus: Christ did *not* refer to any particular individual local organization when he said 'my Church.' He did not mean the Church at Jerusalem or the Church at Corinth. Much less did he refer to *all* the Churches combined in *one great Church*. But he simply used the word as the *name of his institution*. And what that institution was we have already seen."

"I am not sure that I quite understand you."

"Then, let me illustrate. You are a lawyer. A client comes to you for legal information. You tell him that the law is thus or so; and so '*the court*' will instruct '*the jury*.' What do you mean by *the court*? and what do you mean by *the jury*? Not any particular *individual judge* whom you may have in mind, much less all the judges in the world comprised in one gigantic '*universal*' judge; but you mean *any one of all* the judges before whom the suit might be tried; and not any *particular set* of jurymen, much less all the jurymen in the world united in one vast conglomerate '*universal*' jury; but simply that jury, *whichever or wherever* it may be, who may chance to be empanelled on the case. '*The court*' is the name or title given to a certain official personage, when engaged in the performance of certain official duties. '*The jury*' is the name or title given to a certain official body or assembly, when employed in a certain official capacity. Now, as the courts and juries in the British empire transact business and administer justice by the authority of Queen Victoria, and in her name, they may very properly be called *her court*, and *her jury*, meaning thereby simply *her institutions*, organized by her authority for the transaction of this specific business, in her name. The first courts and juries which were organized may have been dissolved; others may have followed, and, like them, have disappeared; but still the *institution* continues: *the jury* is still an essential part of the

apparatus for the administration of justice. A thousand juries are every year empanelled and dismissed, but still *the jury* (using the word as the name of the institution) is perpetual. It has continued since the right of trial by a jury of their equals was first conceded to his subjects by the reluctant king. It will continue so long as the constitution of the English or the American government shall endure. And if I should say that the jury is '*built*' upon the '*rock*' of the constitution, and that the councils of tyrants can never '*prevail against*' or overthrow it, I should speak of it just as Christ did about his Church; but you would not, in that case, insist that the jury must be something much more extensive and permanent than the little company or assembly of twelve chosen men, properly qualified and authorized to transact certain specific business, which everybody knows the jury to be.

"So, you see, Mr. Percy, *both* your difficulties are removed by the same process."

"I give it up, sir. But if it will not at all divert us from our object, I would like to hear Mr. Courtney's exposition of this whole passage. I know that it has given rise to much diversity of opinion; and my own mind is not quite settled in regard to it. I am now perfectly satisfied about what is meant by *the Church*; but what was *the rock* on which Christ said that he would build it? Was that rock Peter? or was it Christ? or was it something Peter had said?"

"If wise men had not disagreed about it," replied Mr. Courtney, "I am sure I should never have felt that there was any mystery in the text. To me it has always seemed as plain and easy to comprehend as any other *figurative* language.

"Christ had been asking his apostles what was said about him in the world. 'Whom do men say that I am?' They answered, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' 'But what,' said he, 'is *your* opinion? Whom do *you* say that I am?' Peter, with

his characteristic promptness, answered for them all: 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.' *This* was what they believed. This was the confession of *their faith*. They held him to be Messiah. They believed he came from God. They took him for their Lord. They trusted in him as He who should redeem Israel.

"Jesus replies, that such faith has come from God alone. Blessed, or happy, art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee; but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say likewise unto thee thou art called '*petros*,' (the masculine form of the Greek word signifying *rock*,) and then, (changing the gender to that form which signified a literal rock,) on this '*petra*' I will erect or build '*my ekklesia*.' This faith in me, as the Messiah, the Son of God, shall be the *basis* of my institution called 'the Church.' The comparison seems to have been suggested by Peter's name. Your name is Rock; and as rocks are used for the foundation of buildings, so on this metaphorical, or figurative rock, he would, metaphorically speaking, erect his building. If he had meant that he would build it *on Peter himself*, he would not have changed the gender of the word Peter, as an individual man, was *petros*, and not *petra*, but it was on this *petra* that he was about to build.

"But now, let us see more particularly wherein the force of the comparison consists. In what particular way did this confession of Peter's bear the same relation to Christ's *ekklesia* that the foundation does to the building? Simply thus: the foundation of a building is *first* laid down, and the superstructure is then reared upon it. The foundation *is the necessary prerequisite* for a permanent edifice. So this confession, this *profession of faith* in Christ, as the Messiah of God, was to be an essential *prerequisite* to the organization of his Church. This faith in Christ lies at the base of this metaphorical building. The Church consists of *individuals*; but

before these individuals can be erected into a Church, *the foundation must be laid by a profession on their part of faith in Christ*. The Church erected on this basis will stand for ever. On any other it will be like the house which a man built on the sand: the winds and storms of adversity and persecution and temptation will soon cause its utter overthrow. Christ says to every one who seeks to be built into this holy temple, as Philip to the Ethiopian officer, ‘If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.’ No other condition will suffice. And just as *the jury*, which, if not composed of persons properly qualified and duly sworn, is *no jury* in law or in fact, though it may be in appearance and in name; so that Church which consists of those who have not in form or in fact made a personal confession of faith in Christ, is not a real Church of Christ. It may be one in appearance and in name, but it is not built upon this rock; and according to the constitution and laws of his kingdom, it is not a *legal* Church, and has no authority to transact his business.”

“If I do not mistake,” said Theodosia, “this comparison of the Church to a building is not uncommon in the Scriptures. I have an indistinct remembrance of having seen it in several other places.”

“Certainly, madam. It is employed several times by Paul,” replied Mr. Courtney, “and that in such a connection as to remove every shadow of a doubt, if we have one remaining, as to its applicability to a *local Church*. To the Church at Corinth he declares, (1 Cor. iii. 9,) ‘*Ye are God’s building.*’ To the Ephesians he says, (Eph. iii. 23,) ‘In whom *ye* also are builded together for *an* habitation [not *the* habitation] of God through the Spirit.’ To the Colossians he says, (Col. ii. 6, 7,) ‘As *ye* have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, *so walk ye* in him, rooted [founded] and *built up* in him, and *established* in the faith that *ye* have been taught.’ So, (Jude

20,) 'But ye, beloved, *building up yourselves on your most holy faith,*' etc.

"What we learn from this text, then, is simply this: Christ was about to set up an institution which should be called '*his ekklesia,*' or his assembly, now commonly in English called '*his Church.*' But this Church could not be built before its *foundation* had been laid in an open profession of faith in him as the Messiah of God. His *ekklesia* should rest upon this basis. Its members must be believers in Christ. This is the necessary and indispensable prerequisite; and *that* institution which *he* erected on *this* foundation shall never be overthrown. It is *an institution of Christ.* He calls it '*my ekklesia.*' It rests on the rock of *faith*, and not on external forms. It, therefore, consists of *believers*, and not of believers and their baptized children. It is a *perpetual* institution, and has continued from the time that he established it till now, and will continue till he comes again. 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' It can, therefore, never *become apostate*, and needs never to be *reformed*; for it will ever continue in its pristine purity and simplicity. Just such an institution now exists; and I trust before we have travelled many days longer in search of it, we may come upon it.

"But, now, lest you may have some *lingering doubt* whether *this Church*, which Christ and Paul so beautifully compare to a building, may not after all be some vast centralization of ecclesiastical authority—some multitude in one—something, the parts of which were 'Churches,' and the whole combined 'the Church'—let us spend a few minutes on the next place, which is, indeed, the only other place in which Christ used the word. That will dissolve the last remaining shadow of uncertainty."

"I am sure," said Mr. Percy, "I do not see how the case can well be made any plainer than it appears to me already. The momentary doubts which came up in my mind arose from

the fact that I did not look at the term '*the Church*' as the general title or name of the *Christian institution*, but was trying to apply it to some *individual example* of the institution. With your explanation the difficulty vanished. I only wonder that I could not see the truth as easily as my wife, before it was pointed out to me."

"You know, my dear," said she, "that we ladies have a way of jumping at our conclusions, while you gentlemen must take time to reason up to the same point. We get there first; but you have this advantage, that you can look back and see the road you came, while we only know that we are there. But now, since Mr. Courtney and you have discovered the principle on which the text is to be interpreted, I have thought of another illustration of it."

"Pray madam," said the Doctor, "do let us have it, for I confess these views of the Church are so new to me, and so different from all my preconceptions, that I am somewhat bewildered, and need *all* the light which can be thrown on the subject."

"The principle," said she, "is the same as that on which the name of an individual is every day applied to the species, genus, or family, to which it belongs. As when we say of the *oak* that it is the most majestic of forest trees, we do not mean any one oak, nor do we mean all the oaks in the world comprised in one '*universal*' oak. Each oak is still a separate and individual tree; but we apply the name of the individual to all the species—not considered collectively, as *one great oak*, but separately, as hundreds and thousands of trees, each having the *same name*. But I don't know whether I am making myself understood: perhaps the example will do it better than my explanation. When God tells Job to look at his behemoth, or at his leviathan, which he had made, he does not mean any particular individual behemoth or leviathan. What he says of them is characteristic of each

individual, and so applies to all the race of these mighty monsters of the land and of the sea."

"Or, to take a more familiar example, Theo.," said Mr Percy, "when he directs his attention to the horse rushing to the battle, he does not mean any particular individual war-horse, but includes all that class of horses to which his description will apply; and we are accustomed every day to use the word *horse* in common conversation just as the word *church* is employed in the text we have been discussing. We speak of *a horse*, referring to *any* individual specimen of the race, as Paul talks of every church; of *the horse*, meaning thereby some particular individual horse, as he speaks of *the Church* at Jerusalem, and the like. Of the horses, meaning those on some plantation, or in some State, as he talks of the Churches of Judea, of Galatia, and of Asia; and we every day speak of *the horse* as the most desirable of domestic animals; of the docility of the horse; of the speed of the horse, and the like, just as Jesus here, and Paul elsewhere, speaks of *the Church* as founded on a rock; as bought with his blood; as the body of Christ, who is its head; and, as we do not mean by the term 'the horse,' when used in this generic or representative sense, all the horses in the world combined in one vast horse, visible or invisible, no more do we mean by the term '*the Church*,' when employed in this representative or generic sense, all the Churches in the world, combined in one great visible or invisible Church. Now, my illustration, if not so beautiful as Mrs. Percy's tree, or so sublime as the behemoth, has at least this recommendation, that it is perfectly familiar."

"Indeed, sir," said the Doctor, "it is very striking and convincing, though it must be admitted that it is not very poetical. And, for my own part, I am ready, Mr Courtney, to go on to the other text you spoke of."

"I had almost forgotten what we were about to do; and thank you for calling it to my mind. I said, or might have said, that Christ, so far as we have any record of the fact, personally employed this word but twice: once as we have seen, and the next time, shortly afterwards, in the next chapter but one. In this, he designates one of the objects for which the Church was constituted. If Mrs. Percy will turn to Matt. xviii., and begin at the 15th verse, she may read us the passage."

"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the Church*; but if he shall *neglect to hear the Church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

"We learned from the other passage," said Mr. Courtney, "that Christ himself would organize the Church, and that it should consist only of believers upon him as the Messiah of God; but we had no intimation of the *objects* which this Church was intended to accomplish, or of the manner in which its business was to be brought before it. In this one, however, a flood of light is poured upon these points. One object, at least, was to secure peace and harmony among the brethren, and the purity of its own membership.

"This text contains the fundamental law of Church discipline. This is the process to be observed in case of disagreement between Church members. The brother who feels himself aggrieved, must first go to the offender and try the effect of a personal interview. If this should fail, he must take one or two brethren, and talk the matter over in their presence, and try what effect may be produced by their suggestions. If this also should fail, he must not let the wound

continue to fester and the sore to spread. He must not go out into the world and proclaim his brother's faults, or make known his own complaints. He must *tell it to the Church*; and if he will *not hear the Church*, then he is no longer bound to treat him as a Christian brother. Here the matter ends. When *the Church* has decided, the question is settled. There is no appeal. There is no higher authority to whom he can go. The Church is supreme. Its decision is final. It cannot be reversed by any authority but its own. Christ is King, and the Church is the executive in his dominion. What the Church does, even though it consist of but two or three gathered in *his* name, asking wisdom from *him*, and guided strictly *by his laws*, he says (verses 18-20) that he will sanction, for he will be invisibly present in their midst.

"Now, let us bring our question, '*What is the Church?*' to this text for an answer.

"I think, Doctor, you do not now consider yourself a member of Christ's visible Church at all. But our Methodist friend thinks you would be one if you should unite with any one of those religious societies which are commonly called Churches. Let us suppose that you had united with his society, and that you and he should have a disagreement in which you felt yourself aggrieved. You have gone to him and talked the matter over, but in vain. You have taken with you one or two more, and tried to reconcile the quarrel through their mediation, but could not succeed; and now, you, as a subject of Christ's kingdom and bound by his law, feel that you have only one more thing that you can do: you are not at liberty to go before the civil courts; you must not *tell it to the world*; nor are you at liberty to leave the matter undecided, and so perpetuate a quarrel between two members of Christ's body. The law of the King is plain and imperative: you must tell it to the Church. This you are ready to do; but now, where is your Church? Whom shall you

tell? Who is to decide for you? The Church. But what is the Church? Is it the class-leader? No. Is it the class? No. Is it the minister in charge? No. Is it the Quarterly Conference? No. Is it the General Conference? No."

"Of course not," interrupted the Methodist. "The Methodist Church consists of all those persons who have passed their six months' probation, and have been recommended by the class-leader, and received by the minister in charge into full membership. No one, I trust, is so simple as to imagine that we regard the class, or the minister, or the Conference, as the Church of Christ."

"Very good," said Mr. Courtney. "Your Methodist Church consists of all who have passed their probation in class, and been admitted to full membership. Could Dr. Thinkwell tell his trouble to *them*? He could not even tell it to the Methodist Church, South; and if he could, *that* would not be the *Methodist Church*, for that must include also the Methodist Church, North; and these would only be the American portion of it. To tell it to the Methodist Episcopal Church, he must raise his voice so as to be heard from Maine to Florida, and from New York to California. Nay, he must lift it above the roar of the ocean, and shriek his complaints across the broad Atlantic, or fail to '*tell it to the Church*,' as Christ commanded him.

"If he had been an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or had connected himself with any other of the great religious combinations or ecclesiastical establishments which are commonly called Churches, he *would* have the same difficulty. If these vast establishments are the Church, *he cannot tell the Church*—he cannot make it hear him. And if we suppose the Church to be that *universal* something which we were speaking of, the difficulty is so much the greater; for then, when he has told his trouble to the Methodist Church, or the Episcopal Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or the Lutheran

Church, he has only told it *to a branch*, and not to the Church itself."

"Excuse me, sir," replied the Methodist, "if I say that this sounds to me like the merest twaddle, since you can hardly be ignorant that we all regard the word church as having two distinct meanings. In one sense, it means *all* those who profess the true religion—the whole vast body of believers in Christ. In the other sense, it is used to designate a single local society or congregation of believers. In the passage before us it has this limited sense. '*It was,*' as the learned Bloomfield says in his note on the place, '*to that congregation to which they both belonged that the offended brother was to tell his grievance.*'"

"I am perfectly aware," replied Mr Courtney, "that the word church in common usage has not only two but half a dozen meanings; but I say, that *in the New Testament*, as a religious and appropriated term, *it has but one*. 'The Church of God and of Christ' was *one* thing, and no more. When this institution is spoken of, it is that one thing which is intended. It was *this* which Jesus said he would build. It was *this* against which the gates of hell should not prevail. It was this to which the brother should relate his grievance. And this was the local assembly of Christian people organized according to Christ's instructions. Bloomfield was right. It *was* to the local organization, 'that congregation to which they both belonged,' that the offended brother was to tell his grievance. In this we perfectly agree. *And now mark me:* If this *was* the body which Christ meant, I will show you that those establishments which people call the Presbyterian Church, and the Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Church, ARE OPEN AND SYSTEMATIC REBELS AGAINST THE LAW OF CHRIST. They have nullified and set aside HIS law of discipline, and substituted their own inventions."

"Those are very hard words, sir, and should have been

well weighed before you uttered them. It is no trifling matter to bring such a charge against the great mass of Christ's professing people; and, sir, God will hold you responsible for such harsh and unfounded accusations against his dear people."

The preacher evidently *felt* all the indignation which he expressed as much by his voice and countenance as in his words; and the scattered company, which had been engaged in reading, or talking, or lounging listlessly upon the sofas, attracted by the peculiar tone of the excited speaker, all turned their faces towards the table around which the discussion was going on; and several left their seats, and came and stood where they could see Mr. Courtney's face as he very quietly replied:

"I have not been accustomed, in discussions upon the subject of religion, to make assertions which I was not prepared fully to sustain. If I do not *show* you that in this matter these so-called Churches have *rebelled* against Christ, set aside and *nullified* his law, and substituted regulations of their own in its place, *then* you may give vent to all the indignation which you think you ought to feel towards a slanderer of your brethren."

"But, sir," exclaimed the unknown lady, "if we are *rebels* against Christ, we cannot be Christians. If these Churches are living in open, systematic, and avowed disregard of his laws, they cannot be his people. And yet I am sure that even you, badly as you seem to think of everybody but your own company, will not deny that there is as much piety and devotion to the interests of religion in these Churches as even among the Baptists themselves."

"I trust, madam, that neither you nor any of this company will so far misunderstand me as to imagine that I mean for *individual members* what I say of the *ecclesiastical establishment* to which they belong. Some of the best and most de

voted men and women that have ever honored the Christian name were Roman Catholics; yet you as much as I believe that the Roman Catholic hierarchy is so much a *rebel* that it is the very '*antichrist*,' '*the man of sin*,' and the '*son of perdition*,' foretold in the Scriptures. Some of her *members* are good subjects of Jesus, who have been deluded and deceived; but the *organization* is antichristian and destructive to true obedience to Christ. So I do not deny that in these other so-called Churches there is a vast amount of *individual piety*; I do not question that there is much truth believed and acted out unto the salvation of souls; but what I say is this: these establishments have, by their constitutional laws, by the arrangements of their systems of judicature, as adopted in their convocations and published in their books of discipline, confessions of faith, etc., *set aside* the law of Christ, and substituted *their own*. And *this act* I CALL an act of open and systematic and deliberate *rebellion*. If you can find a milder and yet appropriate name for it, you may call it something else. *Christ the King* says, 'Tell it to the Church.' They say, No, you are *not* to tell it to the Church. You shall tell it to the '*minister in charge*,' or to a 'committee appointed by him.' If he or they do not decide to please both you and the minister, you may tell it to the quarterly conference, etc. *Christ the King* says, 'Tell it to the Church.' They say, No, you shall tell it to the session, and if the session do not decide to please both parties, then tell it to the presbytery, to the synod, and general assembly. *Christ the King* says, 'Tell it to the Church.' They say, No, you shall tell it to the *bishop*, or those whom the bishop may have appointed. The Church, that is, the assembly or 'congregation to which both the brethren belong,' is not known. The whole business is taken out of the hands of the Church, where Christ commanded it to be decided, and placed in other hands, to which Christ gave no authority. If this is not a *nullifica-*

tion of the law of the King, and substituting another in its place, I do not see what could constitute that act. If this is not rebellion, how can a Church rebel? The same body to which the brother was to *tell* his grievance was that which should *decide* upon it; and *its* decision was to be final. From it there was no appeal. When he had the decision of *the Church*, that was the end of the matter. Now, if you really believe that *the Church*, as Christ here used the words, was the *local society*, how dare you prevent the brother from going to it? and how dare you deny to it the right to hear and to decide? How dare you take the power from *the Church*, and give it to the minister and his committee, or to a quarterly or annual or general conference? If the Presbyterian considers the Church here spoken of to be the 'local assembly of Christ's people,' how does he dare to change Christ's law, and require the brother to tell it to the *session*, and by what authority can the case be taken up to a presbytery, synod, or general assembly? If, by the constitution of our government, the power to declare war and negotiate peace is given expressly to the general government at Washington, then any other organization that shall take upon itself to perform these specific acts, places itself in the attitude of a rebel. If you and these other religious establishments regard the Church here spoken of as the local assembly, nothing can be more clear than that you do not intend to obey Christ's law; for you and they, in utter disregard of *his* commandment to settle the difficulty *in the Church*, require it to be settled in altogether another place, and by altogether different authority. The authority which Christ expressly gave *the Church* you have taken away from the Church, and placed in the hands of individuals, or certain 'judicatory bodies.' "

'The Church,' replied the Methodist, "may very properly be said to do herself what she does by her authorized agents

and representatives. These judicatory bodies are the agents of the Church, through whom she carries out her will."

"Let us look into that a moment," said Mr. Courtney. "The Church which Christ decreed should finally decide between the disaffected brethren, is '*the local society of which they both are members.*' Was this not what you just now asserted?"

"Certainly it was."

"And yet you tell us now that these judicatory bodies, these conferences, councils, synods, and assemblies, are the authorized representatives and agents of '*the Church.*' Now, they *may be* the agents of those amalgamated bodies which you call the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Episcopal Church, and the like; but they *are not* the agents of the *local society* of which both these brethren were members. *Their act is not the act of that society.* Very often it is just the reverse of what that society had determined. They are not the servants, not the agents, but the *masters* of that society. They make laws for that society. They require obedience from that society. They hold that society responsible to them, and not themselves responsible to it. If it refuses to sanction their act, it is liable at once to be cut off from what they call the body of Christ, as a corrupt and offensive member. If it rebels against their decree, or refuses to carry it into execution, it is liable itself to be excluded from what they call '*the Church.*' If, then, Christ left the matter with the Church, *and the Church is the local society* of which both the brethren are members, then these bodies are *usurpers*. They have usurped authority which Christ did not give them, and have taken it away from those to whom he *did* give it. Why, sir, even if the Church *had* delegated her authority to conferences or councils, synods or assemblies, *the act would have been utterly invalid.* Christ could not sanc-

tion it He gave the authority to the Church to be exercised there; and it can be delegated only by an open repudiation of HIS LAW as contained in this text. If it be the local society, therefore, that Christ referred to, then all the authority of your conferences, all the authority of sessions, presbyteries, synods, and councils, is given, claimed, and exercised, not merely without the sanction of the King, but in open disregard of his commandment. The Church that *gives* it is a rebel. The body that receives and exercises it, so far from being in any sense a true Church of Jesus Christ, is, to say the least, an unauthorized intruder. Christ has no use for such a body. Christ never appointed such a body. Christ made the local Church supreme. She has no right to subordinate herself to any power on earth, and that day she does so she ceases to be a Church of Christ, for in HIS Churches *he alone is King*. She may ask *advice* of sister Churches, or of wise and holy men, but she dare not and cannot delegate to others the supreme authority which Christ has vested in herself. His Church is not allowed to call any man, or any set of men, its master. Its members are alike subject to Christ, and all alike responsible to him alone. But how, then, could they be governed? How could discipline be maintained? How could the purity of the body be preserved? There were laws, but how could they be applied, and by what authority enforced? This was the grand problem. In its solution, Paul says, the manifold wisdom of God was made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. His plan was very simple, and, wherever it has been fairly tried, has been found perfectly effectual. He made every one a priest and king. He invested every member with the right to execute his laws, but only when assembled with the brethren. As many as could conveniently unite came voluntarily together and by mutual consent were constituted an '*ekklesia*,

or official assembly, of Christ. It was subject to *his* laws: it acted by *his* authority: it used *his* name to give a sanction to its acts; and as he had *authorized* it, and conferred on it all its authority, so he promised to be in its midst by his Spirit, and to ratify in heaven what it did upon the earth. In this assembly, all were equal. There were no subjects and no lords. For the sake of order, it was needful to have some presiding officer, but he was chosen by the brethren. He was only for the time the chief among his equals. By this assembly the ordinances were administered. To this assembly belonged the duty to enforce Christ's laws. It could not *make* laws. It could not *change* laws. That were to usurp the prerogative of its Master. It could only apply and execute Christ's laws. It was to this body and no other that the brother was to go with his complaint; and when it had decided, no power on earth could reverse its decision. Each Church was complete within itself—independent of all earthly control, and subject only to the law of Christ. *This* was the Church of Christ and of God. *This* was the institution which Christ said, in the other chapter, he would build, and this was the body to which, in this, he directs the offended brother to carry his complaint. From this place we learn only one of its objects, but by turning to 1 Cor. xi 20–34, you will see that it was in this official assembly that the ordinance of the Supper was observed. It was not as individuals, but as an *ekklesia*, an *official* assembly of the members, that they brake the bread and drank the wine, in solemn and sad, yet joyful remembrance of his death. If you turn to Romans xiv. 1, you will find that it pertained to this body to decide who should be received as members. If you will examine the fifth chapter of 1st Corinthians, you will see that it was authorized and required to exclude from its membership the immoral and vicious, and give them over to Satan. From

Gal. vi. 1, and 2 Cor. ii. 8, you may learn that it was empowered to restore the offender upon evidence of his repentance. From 2 Thess. iii. 6, it is evident that it was its solemn and imperative duty to disown and withdraw from those who *changed the ordinances*, or conducted in an unchristian manner.

"These duties and obligations were binding on each *ekklesia* for itself; and in their fulfilment it neither needed nor permitted the interference of any other. Even an inspired apostle, when writing to the Corinthians, would not take the case of discipline out of the hands of the Church; but only instructed them as to what the law of Christ required in regard to the offender. And, on his repentance, he did not undertake to thrust him back into the Church; but kindly *besought* them to confirm their love to the penitent, lest he might be overwhelmed with overmuch sorrow."

"I think," said Dr. Thinkwell, "we may now pass on to the examination of those other passages which you said are commonly understood to refer to the Church universal. We seem to be getting on but slowly."

"The general principle of interpretation which we have just settled," said Mr. Courtney, "will help us more rapidly through the others. We have seen that both from the origin of the word *ekklesia*, and from its actual application in the many cases where it refers to a *real* and *visible* organization, it signified only a *local* and independent body of Christians—never all Christians combined in one body. We have seen, moreover, that the word, without losing this meaning at all, may be employed in a general way, as the *name of the institution* which Christ set up: just as we every day apply the name of an individual to the whole species or family to which that individual belongs: as when we say, the elephant is the most sagacious of brutes; or, the dog is the companion of man. Now, when the term '*the Church*' is thus employed,

it is no more needful to understand it as meaning all the Churches combined in one great Church, visible or invisible, than it is to suppose that the words 'the elephant,' or 'the dog,' thus used, must signify all the elephants in the world, combined in one unwieldy elephant; or that all the dogs are united into one immense dog, who is the companion of some giant man, comprising in his own person all the men upon the earth. Let us then apply this rule to the three passages in which Paul speaks of himself as having persecuted the Church: 1 Cor. xv. 9, Gal. i. 13, Phil. iii. 6. 'For I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.' 'For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it.' 'Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church.'

"It has been thought by some that Paul could have meant nothing less than the Church universal in these places. The truth is, he could have meant no other than the 'Church which was at Jerusalem,' for that was the *only* Church that he ever persecuted. He had it in his heart to persecute that at Damascus also, if he should find one there; but he did not do it. Christ met him on the way, and changed the tiger to a lamb. And when Paul reached Damascus, it was to preach the faith he once destroyed; and be himself the object of the bitterest persecution from his former associates. But what if Paul *had* actually persecuted a dozen or a hundred Churches? It would not follow that he meant to say that he had persecuted some vast visible or invisible organization, comprising in one body all the Church members on the earth. If I say that I have spent much time in hunting *the fox*, or killing *the deer*, I do not mean that I have hunted and killed some great '*universal*' fox, or '*universal*' deer. It is easy to understand that by hunting *any* one individual fox I

hunted 'the fox;' and by killing any one individual deer I killed 'the deer.' Why cannot we permit Paul to use words in the same way? If he persecuted any one individual Church, he persecuted 'the Church.'

"This is plain, common sense. A sportsman can understand, though it may puzzle a doctor of divinity. By the way, it has always seemed very strange to me that men will not bring their *common sense* with them when they come to examine into the meaning of the Scriptures. Suppose, Doctor, that a friend of yours in Louisiana should write to you in language like the following: 'I am a cotton-planter, and yet I am not worthy to be called a cotton-planter, because, some twenty years ago, I was bitterly opposed to Whitney and the cotton-gin.'

"What would you, or any of this company, think of that man's common sense, who would gravely argue from these words that although the cotton-gin is a well-known machine, and there are a great many separate and distinct cotton-gins scattered about on thousands of plantations, yet, some twenty years ago, there must have been some great and complicated machine, composed of all the cotton-gins in the world, united into one *great cotton-gin* '*universal*,' or else this man could not have said, with any propriety, that he had been opposed to '*the cotton-gin*!' Yet this is precisely what doctors of divinity are guilty of when they take it for granted, or try to prove that there must once have been, and must be still, some vast conglomerate body, visible or invisible, called the '*universal*' Church, and composed of all the Christians or of all the Churches in the world; otherwise Paul could not, with any propriety, have said that he '*persecuted the Church of God*.'"

"I think, sir," said the Doctor, smiling, "we may consider these three passages as fairly disposed of"

"Then let us take another. Turn to Ephesians iii. 10 and

21: 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.' 'Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.'

"The idea in the first of these two passages is, that the *angels* of God, who are elsewhere called principalities and powers, might look at this wonderful contrivance of Jesus Christ for the execution of his laws and the promotion of the comfort and piety of his people, and see in it evidences of the wisdom of God. It was a *Divine* contrivance, and characterized by *infinite* wisdom. *Nothing else could possibly have done so well.* Men have not believed this. Men have all the time been tinkering at God's plan, and trying to mend it. Men have set it aside, and substituted others in its place; but to the *angels* it appears the very perfection of wisdom. And it was one object of God in having the Church established, that his wisdom might, through it, be known to those heavenly powers and principalities. But now, what was this plan? What *was* this Church? It was, as we have seen, a local assembly, in which each member was the equal of every other, and by whom, in the name of Christ and by authority from him, his ordinances were to be administered and his laws enforced. What is there in these texts which requires a grand collection of all the Churches into one, in order to make the language appropriate? Suppose a friend in England should write to me that he is about to publish a new history of the *steam-engine*, 'in order that unto kings and princes, in their palaces and on their thrones, *might be made known through the engine the manifold skill of the inventor:*' what would you think of that man's common sense, even though he were a *Doctor of Mechanics*, who should insist upon it, that though the steam-engine was a definite and well-known machine, and there were a vast multitude of separate and distinct steam-engines,

yet there must also be, in some way or other, a vast conglomerate '*universal*' engine, consisting of all the steam-engines in the world united into one; or else the language of my friend, when he speaks of 'showing the manifold skill of the inventor,' through or by 'the engine,' is altogether unintelligible? Yet this is the way that doctors of divinity reason upon a similar expression of Paul.

'In the other passage he says, 'Unto him be glory *in the Church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.' I might remark here, that the original says '*in*' Jesus Christ; and some manuscripts read, in the Church, '*and*' in Jesus Christ. But mere verbal criticism is not necessary to set us right in regard to the point about which we are at issue. Doctors of divinity say that the Church here spoken of must be the Church *universal*, or else the language of the apostle is altogether inappropriate, and has no meaning. Well, let us bring in our *common sense*, and try it.

"I take up a book written by some great admirer of the drama, and read, 'Let the poetry of Shakspeare be honored in the theatre by managers and actors even to the end of time.' Now, your doctor of divinity, reasoning on this as he does on Paul, would assure me that although there are a multitude of separate local theatres in almost every country of the civilized world, yet that there must, in some way or other, be somewhere or other some *one* vast '*universal*' theatre, consisting of all the theatres in the world combined in one, either visible or invisible, or else the language of this writer is inappropriate or meaningless; for the term '*the theatre*,' used in this connection, can mean no less than this great world-embracing establishment; and, perhaps, he might refer me for further proof to the immortal bard himself, who says that 'all the world's a stage,' etc. When will men learn to use their reason in religious as they do in other matters?"

"I grant," said Doctor Thinkwell, "that we have now fairly disposed of six of these passages; but there are some remaining which I do not see what we can do with, unless we admit the existence of a general or universal Church: those for instance, which speak of the Church as the '*body of Christ, who is its head.*'"

"There are a number of such passages," replied Mr. Courtney. "The figure is bold and beautiful; and the Apostle Paul was very fond of it, for he employs it again and again. I have sometimes fancied that he must have borrowed it from Luke, the beloved *physician*, for no one so well as a physician could feel its full force and appropriateness. So far, however, from teaching the doctrine of a universal Church, either visible or invisible, it can only apply with any show of propriety to a single local organization. And to remove even the shadow of a doubt in regard to the matter, the apostle himself distinctly and in so many words *makes this application of it*. He employs this same illustration in his Epistle to the Colossians, in that to the Ephesians, and to the Romans and the Corinthians. And if in any one of these places the language may appear indefinite in its application, all the obscurity is removed by referring to the others. In Colossians, for example, there is the simple assertion, (Col. i. 18,) '*And he is the head of the body, the Church,*' and, ver. 24, '*For his body's sake, which is the Church.*' To the Ephesians, Romans, and Corinthians, he presents it as an argument in favor of meekness and mutual affection and forbearance. The members of each Church were exhorted to love one another, for they were all *one body*, of which Christ was *the head*. They had different gifts and capacities: some were teachers, some were prophets, some could speak with tongues, and some had gifts of healing; some, perhaps, were without any of these extraordinary gifts, but none of them could be dispensed with: each was useful in his place. (Eph. iv. 11-16.) All

these were 'necessary for the edifying' (literally, the *building up*) 'of the body of Christ, that it might grow up into him which is the head, from whom the whole, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body to the building up of itself in love.'

"This language is very appropriate when used in reference to a single Church, whose members are all bound together with the bands of Christian brotherhood, and each is helper of the other's joy and growth in grace. Such a body may well be said to be '*fitly joined together and compacted.*' But now if you apply it to what people call the '*universal Church*, it is simply nonsense. *Where is your universal Church which is thus fitly joined together and compacted?* Are Methodists, and Presbyterians, and Lutherans, and Baptists, and Episcopalians thus '*joined together and compacted?*'

"But it is needless to argue about it. The apostle himself determines what he meant by the body of Christ in these places, and that so plainly and definitely as to preclude the slightest possibility of mistake.

"Turn to Romans xii. 3-8: 'For I say, through the grace given unto me, to *every man who is AMONG YOU*, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as *we* [each one of us] have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office, so we, [Church members,] being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another,' etc

"Now, who were these *members* of Christ's body? Was it the different *Churches* which were all united to make one body? or was it the *individual members of the one Church* at Rome, to which Paul was writing? It was '*every man among them,*' ver. 3. It was *individual Church members* who

were members of the body, which body was *their own Church*—not different Churches who were members or *branches* of some great ecclesiastical establishment.

“But now turn to 1 Cor. xii. 12, where the figure is carried out and elaborated in all its minute details, and its intended application expressed in so many words: ‘For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are [yet] one body: so also is Christ.’ Ver. 14, ‘For the body is not one member, but many.’ And then he goes on to explain how, though each member differs from the others in its capacities and uses, yet it is not only a part of the body, but absolutely essential to its completeness and its comfort. The body is not all eye, nor all ear, nor all hands or feet; but God has set every member of it in its proper place, and endowed it with capacity to perform its proper function. The eye cannot do without the feet, and the feet cannot get on well without the eye. And even those members that seem most feeble and least useful are yet in their place quite indispensable. No one can be taken away or injured but that all the rest will suffer. And then, in the 27th verse, to remove *all possible* doubt about the application of the comparison, and to show to them and to us that he did not mean anybody else, but only the Corinthian Church itself, he says, ‘*Now YE are the body of Christ*, and members in particular.’”

“That is sufficient, sir,” replied the Doctor. “When Inspiration itself has made the application to a single local organization, it were sheer madness in me to insist that it must mean something else. You can go on to your other texts.”

“If Mrs. Percy will turn to the 5th chapter of Ephesians, she will find the word church occurring some five or six times in twice as many verses, and used in a sense very similar to that which we have just examined. Let us begin at the 22d verse: ‘Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as

unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be unto their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.'"

"I do not see," said Mr. Percy, "how we can limit the application of this language to the Church at Ephesus. It is the Church for which Christ died: that Church which he loved and gave himself to purchase: that Church which he is going to present to himself as a glorious Church, holy and pure, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

"Yes," said Mr. Courtney, "it is the *same* Church which he said he would *build*, in Matt. xvi. 18: the same Church to which he directed the offended brother to tell his grievance; and through which his wisdom was to be made known to the principalities and powers of heaven, and through which he is to be glorified for ever. And this, we have already seen, is *not* any *particular* local Church—much less is it *all* the Churches united into one great collective 'universal' Church. Read the 23d verse again. It furnishes the key to the right understanding of the whole passage. Christ is the head of

this Church, which he loved, for which he died, and which he will sanctify and save—*just as* the husband is the head of the wife. 'The husband is the head of the wife, *as* Christ is the head of the Church.' Now, what is here meant by *the wife*? Is it all the wives in the whole wide world considered collectively as making one great conglomerate 'universal' wife? Not at all. The wife is put as a *representative word*. It stands as the general name or title of married women. It does not gather all married women into one immense wife, visible or invisible, 'universal,' but simply means that *every* wife of the whole multitude has her own husband for her guide, her protector, and her lawgiver. And JUST so is Christ the head, the protector, the Saviour and ruler of his Church. As 'the wife' does not here mean all wives in one, so 'the Church' cannot mean all Churches in one. But the meaning is that each and every true Church of the whole multitude of Churches is connected to Christ by a union so intimate and tender that it resembles that between the husband and the wife; and, indeed, it is as though every Church were a part of his very self, 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.'

"The word church stands here, as in the other places of this sort which we have examined, not for a great amalgamated *whole*, but for *each one* of all. Just as Paul, when he says, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, cannot possibly mean that all the unbelieving husbands in the world are to be regarded as constituting one great collective 'universal' husband, who is sanctified by one immense collective, visible or invisible, 'universal' wife, but only that each and every unbelieving husband stands in this relation to his own believing wife.

"This same rule applies to *all* these passages, which seem at first glance, and have been generally supposed, to refer to *all* the multitude of Churches viewed collectively, as one great

conglomerate Church. There is no such a Church: there never was such a Church; and, from the very nature of the case, there never can be such a Church upon the earth. We may *imagine* something of the kind; and as the poet 'gives to airy *nothings* a local habitation and a name,' so, when we have conceived of all Church members *as though* they were assembled in one vast *ekklesia*, we may give a name to this *conception*, and may call it the 'Church universal,' but it will have no more *reality* when we have thus named it than it had before. It will still be a mere creation of the brain. And I do not discover that either Paul, or any other writer in the Word, ever conceived of it or named it. The Church of Christ, as *the executive body in his kingdom*, must of necessity be a visible and working, business-doing body. It *cannot* be invisible: it *cannot* be universal. If it were, it could not be an actual (*ekklesia*) assembly.

"The KINGDOM may be universal. The kingdom includes *all* the Churches. The *visible* kingdom includes all who have professed their faith in Christ, and been baptized, even though they may not be members of any Church. The Ethiopian officer was *in the visible kingdom*, when he and Philip came up out of the water, but he had not yet united with any Church.

"There is also an *invisible kingdom* of Christ, which reaches farther still. Every one who has trusted in Christ, and in his heart has taken him for his Lord, is a subject of this kingdom. Christ's *people* are not all within *his Church*. There are some *even in the realms of Antichrist himself*; for he says, when mystical Babylon, drunk with the blood of the saints, is about to be destroyed, 'Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partaker of her plagues.' The Church is not the kingdom, nor is the kingdom the Church; but the Church is *an institution of the kingdom*, just as the courts of law are *an institution within the State*—making a part of the State

authorized by the laws of the State, and doing a certain kind of business under the authority of the State, but not constituting the State. It is true, nevertheless, that *every subject of the invisible kingdom is required*, by Christ's law, to become, if practicable, a subject of the *visible*, by a profession of his faith, and baptism; and it is also true, that it is the duty and the privilege of *every such subject of the visible kingdom* to become, and continue, if possible, a *member of some Church*. It is only as a Church member that he can participate in the business of the kingdom, or partake of the emblems of the Saviour's broken body and poured-out blood, in remembrance of him.

"We have now examined every place but one, and that will hardly give us any new light upon the question. It is Hebrews xii. 23—a passage confessedly highly figurative and very obscure. It seems to me most probable that the apostle employs the word here in its *common Greek sense*, as denoting merely *an assembly*, or convocation of select individuals; and not in its appropriated use at all. He is contrasting the Jewish economy with the Christian dispensation in general. Their fathers, under the law, came to Mount Sinai—a literal mountain that could be touched; a mountain that glowed with fire, and was shrouded with the blackness of darkness and tempest. They heard the piercing sound of the awful trumpet, and a voice spake such fearful words that those who heard them entreated that they might never hear them any more. And so terrific was the scene that even Moses quaked with fear. *Such* was the terrible aspect of the *law*. But ye, who live under the gospel, have come to Mount Zion—a mountain of peace, security, and beauty—unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written (or registered) in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to

the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel *These* are the things presented by the *gospel*.

"Now, they are represented as having come up to the *heavenly* Jerusalem. It is *there* they meet with the countless company of angels. It is *there* they find the '*pancurei*' rendered 'general assembly,' but meaning, literally, a great *festal* gathering, and there they meet an 'ekklesia' of the '*first-born*,' of those who are *special favorites*; for such was the Hebrew use of the term; or of those who had the birth-right, and who were *registered* in heaven.

"Now, the Greek 'ekklesia' was an assembly of called and qualified citizens, invested with certain rights, and *registered* in the city records. So Paul speaks here of a *chosen assembly* of privileged persons, whose names were *registered* in *heaven*, as having their citizenship there."

"Let it mean what it may," said Theodosia; "I do not see that we can learn any thing from it about the constitution and nature of the Church of Christ *on earth*, unless it be that it should consist only of believers whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"Well," said the strange lady, "I am glad you have gotten through with this tedious task at last. I never knew before how much the Scriptures said about the Church."

"Nor I," said Theodosia; "and I am glad to find their teachings are so uniform and simple. I shall hereafter always *know what a Church is*, and what is *not* a Church. Do you not think, Doctor, you will now be able to know one when you find it?"

"I must confess, madam, that what we have found differs so much from my preconceptions—from all that I was taught in childhood to regard as the Church, and which I have always thought of as the Church—that I must take a little

time to go over the ground again. I want to think about it, and pray over it; and then I may be prepared to answer your question. At present, I am sure all the company must be weary of this long discussion. Let us postpone any further conversation on the subject till to-morrow "

FOURTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

in which are discovered some of the distinctive marks by which one may know a true Church of Jesus Christ, wherever he may chance to find it.

It was singular what strange reports of these conversations reached that part of the boat where the gentlemen passengers sat to play cards and smoke cigars.

The prevailing impression which was made upon those who heard them was, that two gentlemen and a very agreeable lady (who, by the way, thought she was very smart) were trying their best to persuade that old infidel, Dr. Thinkwell, that if he would only be immersed, he might be sure to go to heaven; but if not, he was as certain to be sent to hell as there was any God, or any truth in the Bible.

Some, however, thought there was a difference of opinion on this subject among the disputants; and that it was *only the Baptist preacher*, Percy, that consigned all those who had not been immersed to endless perdition; and that he had assured the Methodist that it would be as hard to find a Methodist in heaven as to find a mackerel in a horse-pond. Another declared that he had heard a part of what was said, and could assure the crowd that they proved every thing by Scripture; "and that," said he, "is of itself enough to show that the Bible is of no account; for any thing in the world that anybody wishes to prove, he can find the text for it. Why, sirs," continued he, "I heard that fellow Courtney say

that he had over a hundred texts to show that there *was* only one Church in the world, and that one was somewhere in the old country."

"One thing is certain," replied his friend: "they can't convince me that old Parson Tompkins don't know what the Bible says; and he is just as strong a Presbyterian as I ever saw."

"The fact is," said another, "they are all of them right, and all of them wrong; and they ought to have some charity for one another, and not be sending each other to hell, just because they do not happen to feel disposed to wade to heaven through the floods of Jordan."

Of such remarks, however, our disputants were happily ignorant; and having themselves no doubt about the truthfulness and the sufficiency of the sacred record, returned to it with perfect confidence that they should be able to find in it the pattern of the Christian Church, so perfectly and so plainly drawn that they would have no difficulty in recognizing it, and by the pattern be enabled to identify the institution as still existing in the world.

"If I did not fail of my purpose yesterday," said Mr. Courtney, "I showed you in the Scriptures—and that not from detached and isolated texts, but from a careful comparison and elaborate examination of *all* the places in which the word *ekklesia* (or Church) occurs—that this institution is not the kingdom, but an organization for certain specific purposes within the kingdom, like the court or the jury within our State."

"I have been looking over the facts and arguments again in my own mind," replied the Doctor, "and I must confess I see no perversion of the texts, and no fallacy in the logic, and must admit that you are right; but yet, I do not see that I am much nearer the accomplishment of the object which I have in view. You have convinced me that the Church is a

local and independent organization, somewhere within the kingdom; but you have not showed me what it is, or told me where I can find it

"I am, I trust, a member of Christ's invisible kingdom: I desire to be incorporated into the visible kingdom. To do so, I understand that I must make public profession of my faith and be baptized. To whom shall I make this profession? and by whose direction shall I be baptized? This falls within the province of the *Church*. If these are the *laws* of the kingdom, and the Church is the executive and administrator of those laws, then I must apply to the Church, in its official capacity, to receive and to baptize me."

"Perfectly correct, sir."

"But I do not know what or which is the Church. *You* will tell me it is to be found among the Baptists. Another says, among the Presbyterians. My parents taught me that the Episcopal was *the* Church; and our Methodist friend assures me that I am at perfect liberty to take my choice among a dozen claimants, and where I can best enjoy myself is the true Church for me. Now, what I want to know is this: how can I tell which of all these is right? Can you show me in the Scriptures any such distinctive *signs or marks* as will enable me to recognize a true Church when I see it?"

"Most certainly I can. The Scriptures are very plain, and abundantly explicit, on this subject.

"We have already seen that the first exemplification of the *ekklesia* or Church of Christ was given at Jerusalem. This was the model after which the other New Testament Churches were fashioned; and the same pattern must regulate the constitution, membership, and rites of the Christian Churches down to the present time.

"Human constitutions may admit of amendment, but the Divine enactment, not being capable of improvement, can never be amended. To know, therefore, what a Christian

Church is *now*, we have only to learn what was *essential* *as it then.*"

"That is self-evident, Mr. Courtney; but we must be very careful that we do not confound what was essential with what was accidental, and, consequently, indifferent."

"Most assuredly, sir, we cannot be too careful; and it may, therefore, be well for us to determine beforehand what *was* of *necessity essential*. All else we may cast aside."

"The first Churches, for instance," suggested Theodosia, "met in private residences, or in the Jewish synagogues; but that was a mere incident, and they would have been just as really Churches if they had met in splendid temples, or in the leafy forest."

"Or," said Mr. Percy, "in 'the caves and dens of the earth,' as they were early compelled to do. But as this was an *official institution* acting under authority of another, and in his name, there must have been some *constitutional* limitation as to its organization—as to who should compose it, and as to the extent of its authority. Christ, as king in this new kingdom which he set up, had enacted certain laws and established certain ordinances. For the proper understanding and administration of these laws and ordinances, he appointed the Church as his judiciary and executive. Now, this judiciary and executive must consist of certain *persons*, organized upon some definite *plan*, and governed in their official work by some specific and designated *rules*. Thus much, at least, must be regarded as *essential*."

"Will it not be better," inquired the Doctor, "to take up one point at a time, and satisfy ourselves regarding *it*, before we go to another? Thus we shall avoid any confusion, and remove even the shadow of a doubt."

"Very good," replied Mr. Courtney, "and let us first ascertain of what character of *persons* a Church must consist to be regarded by us *as a true Church of Jesus Christ*; and I

say, 1st. *It must be composed of those who are members of the visible kingdom.* This is self-evident, (after what we have already settled, viz.: that the Church is an institution within the kingdom, charged with the administration of the laws and ordinances of the kingdom;) for it is inconceivable that the King has intrusted the execution of these laws and the administration of these ordinances to the hands of those who are not in the kingdom; and we have seen already that no one can be a member of the visible kingdom who has not made a profession of *penitence* for sin, and *faith* in Christ, and upon this profession *been baptized* in obedience to his commandment.

“But, lest this may seem to be too summary a method of disposing of the matter, let us go back to the Record again; and, by the same means that we discovered who are members of the visible kingdom, learn who are members of the visible Church.

“We are agreed about one thing, I suppose; and that is, *that whatever was essential to Church membership in the days of the APOSTLES, and in the Churches organized by them, is STILL ESSENTIAL.*”

“Of course,” replied the Doctor, “that needs no proof; for since the time of the apostles no one has been authorized *to change* the constitution of the Church. They established it as they were instructed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, whom he sent to teach them, and bring all things to their remembrance. What was settled by their precepts or by their example, can never be unsettled, amended, or modified by any authority upon earth. Whatever, therefore, *they* made the Church to be, that *was* the Church, and *only* that must it be *now and always*, till Christ comes again.”

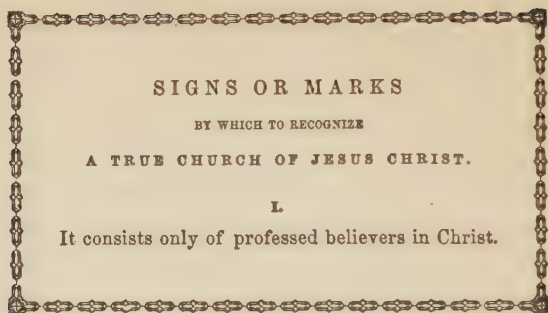
“Very good. Now let us go to the Book, and see what the apostolic Churches were in *regard to their membership*, as this is the point now under consideration.

“ You will remember that the first example of the *ekklesia*, or Church of Christ, was that given at Jerusalem. The people of whom it was composed had been ‘prepared’ and ‘made ready’ by John. He had admitted them *into the kingdom* by baptizing them upon a profession of their penitence and faith, according to the command of Him by whom he was sent. The precise time when the first *Church* was constituted out of these materials, does not certainly appear. We first find it *transacting the business* of the kingdom, as an ‘*ekklesia*,’ in Acts i. 15, 26. It then consisted of only one hundred and twenty, who met in an upper room, and, after prayer, proceeded to elect one of their number to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Judas. These were all ‘disciples:’ they had consequently been instructed. They were all professed believers in Christ; and they were all people of prayer. We are justified, therefore, in the conclusion that they were *all professed believers*. They were men and women, but *no children*. Shortly after this, we read that three thousand were added to this *ekklesia* in a single day; and from henceforth it is designated ‘the *ekklesia* [or Church] which was at Jerusalem.’ The original hundred and twenty were praying men and praying women—disciples of the Lord. The three thousand were such as had been ‘pricked in their hearts;’ (Acts ii. 37;) were old enough to ‘repent’ and ‘gladly receive’ the gospel; and when they had done so they were *baptized*, and added to the Church; and, like the original number, ‘they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.’ (Acts ii. 42.) It seems, therefore, that not a single one of these was a little, helpless baby. Those that continued to be added daily (verse 47) were ‘such as should be saved;’ or, as the original reads, literally ‘*the saved*.’ They were consequently of necessity believers, since no others can be called ‘the saved;’ and especially, since all experience shows that infants added in their

infancy, if always saved, are often saved in sin. The five thousand others that were added to them, (Acts iv. 4,) were those who had heard and understood the word preached, and had believed it to the saving of their souls; and so were the 'multitudes, both of men and women,' who were added as recorded in Acts v. 14. So, also, the great company of the priests (Acts vi. 7) were not admitted till they had become 'obedient to the faith.' This Church, therefore, evidently consisted of 'disciples'—of those who could hear and understand the word—had believed it and repented of their sins, and then had been baptized. Here are over eight thousand men and women expressly mentioned, besides the 'multitudes' of others, who are said to have been added to this *ekklesia*, *but there was not one of them who was not a* **PROFESSED BELIEVER**. If there were any infants, Luke was a false historian. So we may set it down as one of the characteristic marks of a true Church of Christ that it consists of professed believers, and not of 'professed *believers and their children*,' as some teach, nor of believers and *all* the children that can be procured to receive the rite of baptism, whether their parents be believers or not, as our Methodist friends maintain, in common with the largest number of the advocates of Pedobaptism."

"Stop a little, if you please, Mr. Courtney," exclaimed Theodosia; "we shall probably have occasion to refer to these characteristic marks again and again, and I would like to have them written down."

So saying, she produced a little tablet from her reticule, and wrote upon it as follows:



"If you consider me a party to this investigation," said the Methodist, "I will take the liberty to enter my protest against the adoption of this test."

"And so will I, by permission of this company, whom I take to be really desirous to know all the truth as it is in Jesus."

The last speaker was a man in the full prime of life, though a few white hairs were prematurely mingled with his jet-black locks. He had a large and well-proportioned person, but he was very pale, and his intense and large black eyes looked larger and blacker in contrast with the marble brow above, and the ashy, bloodless complexion of the face below. He had been listening all the morning most attentively, and had occasionally made a little note in his memorandum-book of the points presented, but evidently with the design of using them at some other time rather than the present. As he spoke, he laid his hand emphatically upon the edge of the table, and showed that, however reluctant he might have been to engage in the conversation before, he was now quite ready to take his part.

"I have listened," continued he, addressing Mr. Courtney, "with much pleasure to most of your remarks, for I love to witness a fearless and bold investigation of any subject, and

especially of one connected with our holy religion. I have been confined to my berth from sickness till this morning, and so have not enjoyed the pleasure of being present at your previous conversations, which, I understand, have occupied a part of every morning for several days; and I had no intention of taking any part in your discussion. I hope, however, you will pardon me if I suggest that there is really no foundation for this *test* which you have so plausibly set up, and endeavored to establish by such an ingenious array of Scripture proof."

"Of course," rejoined the Methodist, "we cannot admit such a test as this, for if we do, it will at *once unchurch* almost the whole of Christendom."

"That is true," said the other, "but it is not upon that ground that I object to it. I understand that the only appeal in this discussion is to the *Holy Word*. And although for myself I feel bound to interpret that word in accordance with what 'the Church' has in every age and every country understood it to express, yet, so fully am I convinced that the Church has understood it according to its natural and legitimate signification, that I am quite willing to appeal to that word as it stands recorded, and take each sentence in its common and proper acceptation as the ordinary sense of the language may require; and the objection which I have to the test proposed is that it is *really unscriptural: it is not sustained by the Record*."

"That is, certainly," replied Mr. Courtney, "a valid ground of objection. We desire to find *the Church which was established by Christ and the apostles*. We recognize no authority but the Bible. We *know* that tradition is a liar; but God's word we know is very truth. As Protestants, we believe it is a *sufficient* rule, both of our faith and practice. What we cannot find there we do not feel bound to recognize as of any binding force; and we, as individuals, each one accountable

for himself to the God of the Bible, feel bound each to examine and learn its teachings for himself. If you can receive the *teachings of the Church*, it is because you have already settled the question for yourself what the Church really is. But that is the very question about which we are at issue. We, as yet, know not what the Church is, nor where it is, and consequently we can neither ask for nor receive her interpretations. But if you will come to this Book, and let us examine for ourselves into the meaning of the words, we will gladly entertain any and all the objections you may offer."

"I think, sir," replied the Bishop, (for it was no other than the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of —,) "I think, sir, I understand your position; and I am willing to meet you on your own ground; and what I say is simply this: *It is not true that the apostolical Churches consisted only, and in all cases, of adult believers.*"

"Then we must set aside our test," replied Mr. Courtney; "but you do not expect us to take *your word* for it. You will, of course, tell us what others were admitted to Church membership by the apostles, and point us to the chapter and the verse, that we may see it in the Record for ourselves."

"Certainly, my dear sir, I will show it to you in the Book;" and as he said so he drew the Bible towards him, and turned to the sixteenth chapter of Acts. "It must be admitted," said he, "that the account given of the Church at Jerusalem makes no special mention of any but such as you have designated; but it does not follow of necessity that there *were no others*. We do not read that the apostles ever were baptized, but yet we have no doubt they were; and, though there is no record made of the baptism and consequent Church membership of the children and families of the Jerusalem Christians, yet, since we know that *elsewhere* the apostles baptized the whole household upon the faith of the head of the house, and since Peter, in that discourse in which he first proclaimed

the tidings and the terms of Christ's salvation to the Jews, assured them that the promise was not merely to them, but to their children, I think we are justified in concluding that they must have afterwards received the children of the Jerusalem Christians—though there is no record of the fact. And this assumption is greatly strengthened by the circumstance that we read neither in the Scriptures, nor in any other history of those days, of any excitement or commotion upon the subject of excluding the children, as there surely must have been had so great a change in the economy of the Church of God been actually made; for, under the regulations of the Jewish Church, *children had always* been admitted to membership, and could not now have been excluded without occasioning at least some questioning, if not remonstrance."

"You may think us very unreasonable," replied Mr. Percy, 'but we can be satisfied with nothing less than some *plain precept* telling us that children *may* become Church members, or some *example* showing that they *did* become Church members. Our investigation of the Scriptures has taught us already that the Church is a *business-doing body*: a body to which Christ, the King, intrusted the execution of his laws and the administration of his ordinances. We cannot conceive of such a body being composed of little children either in whole or in part; and, unless you will show us the command that brought them in, or some example of their actually being in, we must doubt if they ever were in. In the Church at Jerusalem, the only one which we have yet examined in reference to this point, we have found the record of the admission of eight thousand members, and great multitudes more, but they are *all*, without *any single exception*, spoken of as men and women who could hear the word, believe the word, receive it with gladness, and continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. There is not the slightest intimation that they brought their children with them, or that there

was a single crying baby in the whole vast company. But you say there *may have been*, though there is no record of it. I might say, so there *may have been monkeys!* The thing is not impossible in the abstract. But where is the proof? Is it in the fact that Peter said, 'The promise is to you and to your children?' But that was not a promise of *Church membership*, but only that God would 'pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,' etc. What has this to do with babies? Is it in the fact that children were circumcised under the law of Moses? But this Church was neither a continuation nor a modification of the Mosaic dispensation. It was a *new* institution. It belonged to the *new* kingdom which the prophets had foretold, and which Christ came to establish. 'The law and the prophets were *until John.*' Then they were superseded by the coming of the Lord. He made the laws for his *own* kingdom. If infants were members of the Jewish economy, it was because God had so *ordained* and expressly *declared* through Abraham and through Moses; and if Jesus declared as plainly or at all that they must be members of his *new* institution, you can show us the record in the New Testament, which is the law of his kingdom, as the Old was of the other."

"I am aware, gentlemen, that the inferences I drew do not make it *certain* that there were infants in the Church *as it was constituted at Jerusalem*, but they at least make it exceedingly probable; and if we can find that they were admitted at *any time* or in *any place* by *any* of the apostles, it will be all the same in regard to our argument as though we could show them in the Church at Jerusalem."

"That is quite true, sir," replied Mr. Courtney. "Find them where you can, and we will yield the point."

"I was about to call your attention to the 16th of Acts, in which we have two instances of the reception by Paul and Silas of the whole household of a believer; and you know

these are but two of several others of a similar kind, as that of Cornelius, of Stephanas, etc."

"Did any of these households consist of unbelievers, or of little infants?"

"It is most likely that they did: most families have such."

"But is there any *proof* that there were actually any in *these* families? Are any of them *said* to be unbelievers or infants? On the contrary, is it not said of the household of Stephanas, that they 'devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints?' Is it not expressly said of the family of Cornelius, that the 'Holy Spirit fell upon them, and that they spake with tongues, and magnified God?' (Acts x. 44-46.) Were not Lydia's household 'the brethren' (spoken of in the 40th verse of the chapter) whom Paul and Silas comforted, after they left the prison and returned to her dwelling? And did not Paul 'speak the word to all' the household of the jailer, and did not 'all his house' unite with him in believing? Ver. 34. There is, if I read rightly, just as much evidence that they '*believed*,' as there is that they were '*baptized*.'"

"But there are," said the Methodist, "at least two places in which children are recognized as Church members, and those are Col. iii. 20, 21, where Paul says, 'Children, obey your parents in all things,' and Ephesians vi. 1, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord.' If they were not Church members, how could they be exhorted to obey *in the Lord*? And, in fact, if they were not in the Church, how could Paul address them at all, as his epistles were written to the Churches?"

"My dear sir," replied Mr. Courtney, "do you suppose one ceases to be his father's *child* when he is old enough to believe the gospel? The child among the Greeks did not *legally* become a man until he was *twenty-five*, just as he does not legally become a man with us until he is *twenty-one*. Till then he was, in the language of that age, called a child—

sometimes a *little* child, though old enough to have **been** counted a man with us. But, not to quibble about words, **one** thing is certain: *these* Ephesian and Colossian children *could not* have been *babes*, otherwise it was folly to address them. They must have been old enough to *understand the epistle*, otherwise it could with no propriety appeal to them. And if old enough for this, they were old enough to understand the gospel and believe in Christ. Hence the apostle, in the beginning of the letter, addresses the Colossians as 'saints and faithful brethren in Christ,' (Col. i. 2,) and the letter to the Ephesians is addressed to 'saints' who were 'faithful in Jesus Christ.' (Eph. i. 1.) Moreover, they were people who 'trusted in Christ,' and 'who loved the saints,' (i. 13-15.) They had been dead, but brought to life by the gospel, (ii. 1.) They 'had been in darkness, but were now light in the Lord,' v. 8."

"But is there *nothing*," asked the Doctor, "in the history of *any* of the other Churches at variance with the remarkable facts at Jerusalem? Were *all* who at any time united with any one of the Churches as evidently believers as those were in the first Church?"

"You shall judge for yourself, sir. The next Church of which we have any account is that at Samaria, and of that we read, (Acts viii. 12,) 'They believed Philip, and were baptized, both men and women.' If there were also children, Luke was a false historian, or he must have mentioned them. The members of the Church at Rome are spoken of as believers, and such believers that their 'faith was spoken of throughout the world.' (Rom. i. 7, 8.) To the Corinthians Paul wrote, 'Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.' (1 Cor. i. 2.)

"The Church of the Thessalonians, Paul says, 'received

the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost' (Thess i. 6.) And *nowhere*, in *any* place, is there *any* intimation given that *any* Church consisted, or *could* consist, of any but professed believers. In fact, the admission of any others must be for ever precluded by the very objects for which the Church was constituted. It was to be, as we have seen, the judiciary and executive in Christ's kingdom. It is the Church that is to receive members. (Rom. xiv. 1.) The Church is to cast out the wicked. (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.) The Church is to restore the penitent. (2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.) The Church is to set apart ministers. (Acts i. 23; vi. 5.) The Church is to send out missionaries. (Acts xiii. 3.) The ordinances of the kingdom are in the keeping of the Church; and in the Church, when it has come together, the Lord's Supper is to be observed, as a perpetual memento of his love, until Christ comes again. (1 Cor. xi. 20, 33.) Now, such duties as these *cannot be performed by little children*, and will not be properly performed by the unconverted. To suppose that Christ gave such duties in charge to children and the unconverted, in short, to any but believers, is to suppose him guilty of such folly as we would expect to find in none but an idiot or a madman."

"But you forget," replied the Methodist, "that the Church did not consist *entirely* of such, and in *our* communion they have none of the privileges of membership until they have professed a desire for conversion, and have joined the class, and gone through their six months' probation."

"Though the Church has always admitted little children by baptism," added the Bishop, with dignity, "yet the rite of confirmation has ever been regarded as indispensable to their recognition as complete Church members."

"I know very well," said Mr. Courtney, "that you have both of you these unscriptural and anti-scriptural appendages to what you call the Church. I do not wish to discuss them

now We will come to them in regular order by and by. We have seen in the Scriptures that Christ set up a kingdom on the earth, as had been foretold by the prophets. In that kingdom he alone is king. He made the laws: he appointed the ordinances. The visible administration of these laws and ordinances he vested in 'the Church,' which, we have also seen, consisted of the *believers* in any place who were gathered into an official assembly to transact this business in his name. You say that this Church consisted of 'believers and their children,' or of believers and *all* children who can be procured to be baptized. The only proof you offer that has even the semblance of testimony is, that several *families* were baptized by the apostles. Now I say, first, there is no proof in the record that there was a single child, or an unbeliever, in any one of these families. You can find whole families of adults, and of believers, in every neighborhood, and such these might have been, for aught that is in the record. Then, I say, in the next place, that the record actually *shows* that they *were* all believers, since they are called brethren, and are said to believe, rejoice, speak with tongues, glorify God, and give themselves to the work of the ministry.

"This is enough, surely, to set aside your proof; but now I go still further, and say that to have received the unconverted, whether children or adults, would have utterly subverted the very objects for which the Church was instituted, and consequently it would have been no less than madness to admit them. I know we differ here, because we differ in regard to what the *objects are* for the accomplishment of which the Church was constituted. You Episcopalians look upon it as the instrumentality of salvation. You baptize the children and receive them into the Church to *save their souls*. You pretend thus to *regenerate* and *make them members of Christ*. The *Scriptures* teach, however, that they must be *first* made *members of Christ*, (by faith,) and *then* made members of the Church."

of Christ. They do not come into the Church *for* salvation, but they are entitled to its privileges and required to assist in the transaction of its business, because they are already of the saved. They must *belong to Christ* before they can be qualified to *act for Christ*. He does not set men and women (or little babies either) to administer the laws and ordinances of his kingdom until they have first become the willing subjects of the King. And if the Church be, as we have seen that it is, the authorized executive of his kingdom, it follows, of course, that *none who are not professed believers upon him can be admitted to its membership*. To admit them would be to place the management of the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of his enemies."

"But, my dear sir," exclaimed the Methodist, "we do not intrust the management of the *business* of the Church to the hands of the baptized children of the Church."

"That is very true, sir. You do not intrust it to the children nor to the adults. You do not intrust it to the Church, at all. You preachers have usurped the whole authority, and vested it in yourselves. The Church has nothing to do but to reverently obey you, as you have sworn reverently to obey your bishop, or chief minister. And you, sir," addressing the Episcopalian bishop, "have also taken upon yourself to lord it over God's heritage. But we will come to speak of these things hereafter. What I wish to say now is simply this: you both baptize little children to make them *members of the Church*. When you have done so, I suppose you will not deny that they *are* members; and if they are members, *how dare you exclude them from any right or any privilege that Christ conferred upon Church members?* Does the Word anywhere authorize you to exclude Church members (except for open sin) from the table of the Lord, until they become 'seekers,' or until they have learned a few questions and answers in the catechism, and have had the bishop'

hands put on their heads? Does the word anywhere authorize you to drive any Church member (except for open sin) out of a business meeting of the Church, or to deprive him of equal privileges there with any other member? If it does, you can show me the text. If it does not, your baby members are entitled to equal privileges with any other members."

"Not at all, sir," replied the bishop. "They would be excluded from an equal participation in the privileges and duties of Church members, from their very incapacity properly to enjoy or perform them; and, consequently, no express scriptural injunction was required."

"But if that be so," replied Mr. Courtney, "it is surely an act of most consummate folly on your part to make Church members of them. If they can neither enjoy the privileges nor perform the duties of Church members, what business have they in the Church? Why make them members till they are qualified to act the part of members?"

"It is useless, sir," said the bishop, very solemnly, "for us to dispute upon this point, until we have agreed upon another; and that is, whether Christ did not institute the ordinances of his house as a means of salvation?"

"O, well, if you baptize the baby *to save its soul*, that is another matter; and if you make it a Church member to give it the benefits of Church forms, it can perhaps receive them. But I have not been able to find in the book any authority for conferring these or any other Church privileges upon any but the penitent and the believing. The Christian dispensation was introduced by John; and John received and baptized none who had not professed their penitence and faith.

"Christ was himself the next preacher in this dispensation; and he, like John, proclaimed that men should *first* repent—should *first* believe, and *then* should be baptized.

“Peter was the first to preach the gospel, after Jesus had gone up; and he said, like his Master, ‘Repent and be baptized.’ And they were not baptized till they had ‘gladly received the word.’

“When Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans, they first believed, and then they were baptized.

“When the eunuch asked for baptism, he was informed that it could be given only on condition of his faith.

“Paul was not baptized until he was a penitent believer.

“The household of Cornelius were not baptized until the Holy Ghost had fallen on them, thus giving evidence that they belonged to Christ.

“Lydia was not baptized until the Lord had first opened her heart, so that she attended to and believed the gospel, as it was preached by Paul.

“The jailer believed in Christ, with all his house, and then they were baptized.

“Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and then they were baptized.

“All the Churches to whom the epistles were addressed, consisted, as we have seen, of believers in Christ. And, in the language of the famous Pedobaptist, Richard Baxter, author of the *Saint’s Rest*, I can say: ‘*In a word, I know of no one word in Scripture that giveth us the least intimation that ever man was baptized without the profession of a saving faith, or that giveth the least encouragement to baptize any upon any other faith.*’”

“I think, gentlemen,” said Doctor Thinkwell, “we shall be obliged to let this test stand on our tablet. It seems to me that, if *any thing can be proved* from Scripture, this has been, namely, *that the first Churches consisted only of professed believers.* And now let us hasten on, or we will finish our voyage before we have completed our examination

Is there any other peculiarity which invariably and of necessity characterized these ancient Church members?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Courtney. "They were, of necessity, every one of them *baptized*; for it was by the rite of baptism that they were admitted into the *visible kingdom*; and the visible Church could not go *outside* the visible kingdom for her members."

"Then you do not claim that baptism is the door of entrance into the *Church*?"

"Strictly speaking, it is not, sir. It is the way of entrance into 'the visible *kingdom*;' and through the kingdom to the Church. No one can reach the Church, except through baptism; but every baptized believer is not a Church member. The eunuch was in the visible kingdom as soon as he was baptized; but he was not a member of any Church. The Church consists of such baptized believers as have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the scriptural constitution, to administer Christ's ordinances, and enforce his laws among themselves. But it is just as true that no one can be a Church member who has not been baptized, as though baptism were itself the door of entrance into the Church."

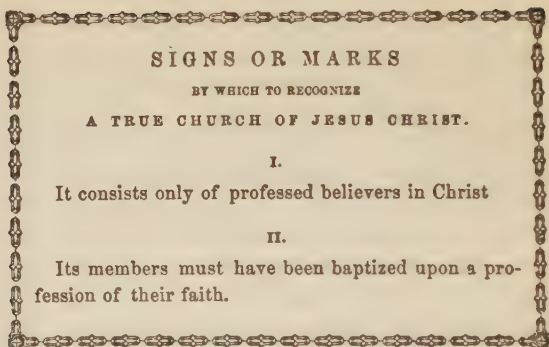
"Excuse me, Mr. Courtney," said Theodosia; "but do not Baptists receive members into the Church by baptism?"

"Certainly not, madam. They sometimes *think* they do; and, in fact, a *formal* admission is dispensed with, and their membership is taken for granted. But the facts are these: The candidate comes before the Church and asks for baptism. (If it were not convenient to come to the Church, he might ask it of any one whom the Church had previously authorized to administer it. But it is always desirable and prudent to have the advice and sanction of the Church when it is practicable.) The Church, after hearing his experience of *grace*, in order that it may be able to judge whether he is

ally a penitent believer, directs him (if his experience be satisfactory) to be baptized. And then, after his baptism, the members of the Church, or the pastor in their name, gives him the right-hand of fellowship, in token of his reception as a member. He first gives himself to Christ in his heart, by faith; then he goes to Christ's people, and makes *profession* of his penitence and faith. Upon this they are authorized and required to admit him into the *visible kingdom* by baptism; and he *then* gives himself to some company (*ekklesia*) of Christ's people, to walk with them in all Christ's ordinances: to aid them in their labors, and be subject to them in love. In general, however, the application for baptism is regarded by both parties as an application for reception into the Church as a member, and the determination that he ought to be baptized is accompanied by a resolution to regard him as a member so soon as he shall have been baptized; and he is, therefore, immediately upon his baptism, a member, to all intents and purposes, even without any formal act of recognition."

"All this is nothing to our present purpose," said Mr. Percy. "The question before us is not whether one is made a Church member *by* baptism, but whether he can be a member *before* baptism and without baptism? Whether baptism makes him a member, or only qualifies him to become a member, it is certain that *all* the members of the apostolic Churches were baptized people."

"Let me so write it in the tablet," said Theodosia. She wrote, and it then read thus:



"I think, my dear," said Mr. Percy, when she read it aloud, "you have slightly exceeded our instructions in adding that last clause. We have seen that the Scriptures teach that they were all believers; and we know they were all baptized; but our friends here may object to your making the baptism *necessarily subsequent to a profession of faith*, for that will cut off even real Christians who chanced to be baptized *before* they were old enough to believe or make profession."

"What if it does?" she answered. "I thought we were to decide these questions by the teachings of the Book; and if the Book teaches that Church members must be professed believers, it teaches just as plainly, and by the same passages, that baptism must *follow* faith. It was 'repent and be baptized,' 'believe and be baptized,' that John and Christ commanded; and all Church members that we read of, *first* repented and believed, and were *then* baptized upon *profession* of their penitence and faith. We have not found a single case of baptism *first*, and faith and penitence coming after it."

"She is right, sir," said the Doctor, "so far as our investigations have gone; but is it certain that we have seen *all* the teachings of the Word upon this point?"

"If there were even the shadow of proof that any such in

stance existed, we should have had it paraded by our Pedobaptist friends long ere this," said Mr. Courtney. "They have told us that infants were circumcised, and, therefore, *ought to be baptized*: that Christ took little children in his arms and *blessed* them, and, therefore, they *ought to be baptized*: that he told his disciples to *let them come* to him, in order that he might put his hands on them and bless them, and, therefore, they *ought to be baptized*: that the word of God nowhere *forbids* their baptism in direct terms, and, therefore, they *ought to be baptized*: they tell us that children are born *sinner*s, and, therefore, *ought to be baptized*: that they are called *holy*, and, therefore, they *ought to be baptized*. They tell us that they *are born in the Church*, and, therefore, *ought to be baptized*; and that they *ought to be baptized to bring them into the Church*. They give a vast number and a great variety of strange and contradictory reasons why they *ought to be baptized*; but they have *never* presented *any single instance* in which either an infant, or any other who had not made profession of penitence or faith, *ever WAS baptized* by John or Christ, or any of the apostles—except so far as they may take it for granted that the baptized *households* or families were not believing families—a supposition which we have seen is utterly untenable."

"If," said Theodosia, "the baptism of these *families* proves that *little infants* were baptized, I will undertake to prove that *little infants* voted for General Taylor when he was chosen President; for I can find a dozen men who will each of them testify that he and all his family voted for the hero of Monterey and Buena Vista. But, since little infants are not capable of voting, and since the Constitution requires that every voter shall be twenty-one years of age, I take it for granted that these families consisted of grown-up boys, or others legally qualified to vote. What would you think, Doctor, of a writer on the constitutional conditions of

citizenship in the United States, who should maintain that little infants were certainly entitled to vote, for the history of the country records several instances in which *whole families* had voted for Washington, for Jefferson, for Jackson, and Taylor!"

"I would think," interrupted Mr. Courtney, "that he exhibited quite as much common sense, and quite as much acquaintance with the rules of logic, as those doctors of divinity who maintain that infants must have been baptized, because among the thousands and thousands who believed and were baptized in the apostles' days there were some half a dozen households.

"But we are discussing again a position which we had already settled. We have seen that none but professed believers could be Church members; and we are now to inquire whether *they* could be Church members before they had been baptized?"

"I hardly think it necessary to make an argument on this point," said Mr. Percy, "since *all* denominations, so far as I know, substantially agree that no one can be admitted to the Church without that ceremony which they call baptism."

"I would be glad, nevertheless," replied the Doctor, "to know upon *what scriptural authority* all denominations rest this item of their faith and practice."

"That is very easily made out, Doctor. 1st. Christ *commanded* them to believe and be baptized, and this is, therefore, after profession of faith and penitence, the first formal act of external obedience.

"2d. All of whom we read in the Book were at once baptized upon profession of their faith. The three thousand who believed upon the day of Pentecost, and all the many thousands who were added to them in various places afterwards, were all baptized. No instance is on record of one being received without it.

"3d. The first Christian Churches were habitually addressed as *baptized* persons. We are told that they had '*been baptized into Christ*,' '*buried with him by baptism*,' and the like.

"These proofs are so strong and complete that, although some have dispensed with any *personal profession of faith*, yet no denomination claiming to be a Christian Church has ever dispensed with what they called baptism, or considered those as complete Church members who had not received *something* which they regarded as baptism."

"How, then," asked the Doctor, "can this be a characteristic or *distinguishing* mark, since all the claimants possess it in common?"

"The true Church, sir," said Mr. Courtney, "must not merely have a rite which is *called* baptism: it must have *actual* baptism: it must have *that very baptism* which Jesus Christ commanded, and *these first Churches practiced*. That cannot be a true Church of Christ which has *abolished* his baptism and *substituted some other ceremony* in the place of it, even though that other ceremony should be called by the same name with his."

"But, my dear sir," exclaimed the Doctor, "don't you see that if we attempt to make any practical application of this mark, we shall be first obliged to go over the whole baptismal controversy in order to ascertain what *was* the act which Christ in fact commanded?"

"Not at all, sir. It will not be necessary to *prove* what was the original act, since they themselves admit it; nor will it be needful to prove that they have *changed* it, for they have, some of them at least, confessed it, and openly claim *the right* to change it again—as often in their discretion as they may think best.

"Very well. Then we may consider ourselves as having taken at least two steps in our investigation. We have ascer-

tained that a Church, as regards its members must consist of professed believers, and that these believers must have been baptized. What have we next?"

"If you will permit me to suggest another mark," said Mr. Percy, "I will remind you that in our examination yesterday we found that the Church, when regarded as an actual, visible, working body, was in *every instance* a local and an *independent* body. Now, since it is the actual and visible Church for which we are looking, we will find it a local, separate, and independent organization, complete in itself, and *not bound up with others in any great ecclesiastical establishment*. It cannot be any collection of federated, religious societies, mutually bound together and subordinated to each other, or to some common head. It stands alone, supreme under Christ, as regards its own membership; but having no authority beyond the pale of its own number. There is, in the Scriptures, no appearance of subordination of Church to Church, of one Church to many, or of all to one. There were no territorial Churches and no national Churches. The Church at Jerusalem was *one* Church: the Church at Antioch was *another* Church: the Church at Ephesus was another. Each of the multitude of the Churches which were 'scattered about throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria,' was just as much a Church as the Church at Jerusalem. There was no Church of Judea including them all; nor did any one of them, or all combined, pretend to exercise authority over any other."

"Certainly," said the Doctor. "If we have discovered *any* thing about the Church, we have discovered that it is a local and independent organization."

"And this is equally true of the Church," said Mr. Courtney, "whether we consider it as an actual, visible, and working *assembly*, met together for the worship of God and the administration of the laws and ordinances of Christ, or whether,

in accordance with the usage of modern language, we employ the term generically to signify our *mental conception* of all the visible Churches in the world, as if they were united in *one great universal assembly*. The whole cannot be different from the parts of which it is composed.

“If every true Church is, as we have seen, a local and independent organization, then the aggregate of them all cannot include any that are not thus local and independent; and if federated ecclesiastical establishments are not true and scriptural Churches, then such establishments can make no part of a true and scriptural *conception* of a visible Church universal.”

“It is of no consequence at all to me,” said the Doctor, “what this *imaginary* body may be composed of. I want to find the real. I can readily conceive of a great visible Church universal, including all *true* visible Churches. I can conceive, also, of a great visible Church, including all that *claim* to be Churches. I can conceive of a vast *invisible* Church, including all believers, past, present, and to come; but these are not the objects of my search. I want to find that visible organization to which Christ has intrusted the administration of his laws and ordinances; and I am satisfied that when I find it, it will be a *local and independent organization*, composed of baptized believers.”

“Let me write this third mark in my tablet,” said Theodosia.

When she had written, the tablet read thus :



SIGNS OR MARKS

BY WHICH TO RECOGNIZE A TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

I.

It consists only of professed believers in Christ.

II.

Its members must have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.

III.

It is a local organization, and independent of all others.

"I do not feel quite satisfied with this last mark," said Mr. Courtney. "It tells the truth, but not the whole truth. Each Church of Jesus Christ is a separate organization, complete in itself, and competent of itself to exercise all the functions of a Church. It can receive members. Rom. xiv. 1. It can exercise discipline (1 Cor. v. 1-13) by expelling or suspending members. It can restore them upon repentance. 2 Cor. ii. 1-11. It can reject false teachers, and cast out those who hold false doctrines. Tit. iii. 10 : Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. It can elect its own officers. Acts vi. 1-7 ; xiv. 23. It can ordain and send out missionaries, or evangelists, to found other Churches, which, however, when established, shall be as independent as itself. Acts xiii. 1. And it can do all that, in the Scripture, is predicated of any Church of Christ. But, while it is independent of all other Churches or federations in its organization, and in the exercise of its functions, it is so absolutely dependent on Christ its Lord and King, that it *can make no laws*, but only execute the laws which Christ has made ; and it can exercise *no authority*, but such as was specially delegated to it by Christ. It is simply and only the *executive* body to which Christ has intrusted the administration of his kingdom, according to the constitution and laws

which he made for its instruction and government. I would therefore have preferred that when you wrote it down as an *independent* organization, you had added some word to show the limit of this independence."

"I think, sir," replied Mr. Percy, "that we will understand well enough what we mean by our mark, especially after your explanation; but let me ask if this absolute recognition of *Christ as its only head and lawgiver* does not itself constitute one characteristic mark of a true Church? If it is the executive of his kingdom, it must, of course, execute the laws of the King. Christ is its sole and only Lord. He makes the laws. It is *as his laws*, and only as such, that the Church can execute them; and in doing this it must proceed in strict accordance with the requirements of the King. The executive cannot make laws for itself. It is bound by those already made, and must carry them into effect alike, whether it approves or disapproves. It cannot abrogate them. It cannot nullify them. It cannot change or modify them. It can only ask, What was the intention of the Lawgiver? What did he say, and what did he mean by what he said? When this is known, it has no discretion left. If it changes the law; if it refuses to execute it as it was given, it is a virtual rebellion and *secession* from the dominion of the King. It is no longer *his executive*. It is no longer *his Church*. But if it goes still farther, and permits *other* lords to make laws for it, and acknowledges allegiance to other powers, then it has not only rebelled against and seceded from the rightful sovereign, but has united with his enemies, or at least with his rivals. It is, then, not only no longer a Christian Church, but it is *anti-Christian*; not only not Christ's, but against Christ's Church. Nor will it make any legal difference whether these new lords and lawgivers make their new regulations in their *own* name, and openly and avowedly on their *own* authority, or whether they claim in the *name* of Christ a

right *which he has never given them.* A Church of Christ has Christ *alone* for her King and Lawgiver, and can never acknowledge the authority of any man or body of men—not even of herself—to change one jot or tittle of Christ's law, or to institute new laws or regulations in regard to her ordinances, her terms of membership, her rules of discipline, or any thing else that comes within her province as a Church of Christ.

“That is most certainly an indisputable conclusion, which grows of necessity out of the admission that Christ is her only King. And I do not suppose that any man, or body of men, claiming to be Christians, will deny that Christ is the head over all things to his body, which is the Church, or that any thing is to be received by the Church as a rule either of faith or practice which does not rest upon ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ as its authority.”

Mrs. Percy took up her tablet again, and entered this mark, and it then read—

SIGNS OR MARKS BY WHICH TO KNOW A TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

1st. It consists only of professed believers in Christ.

2d. Its members must have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.

3d. It is a local organization, and independent of all others.

4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.

“We have now seen,” said Mr. Courtney, “the characteristics of a scriptural Church in regard to its *membership* and its *constitution*. We need yet to learn what were its *peculiar doctrines*, and what were the *objects* or purposes of its organization.”

“I remember,” said Theodosia, “that when we were studying the nature of the *kingdom*, the other day, we found that

all its subjects were *voluntary* subjects, who had come of their own free will and accord, and had sought for admission. Is it not also a characteristic of a Church within this kingdom that its members must have become such by their own personal and voluntary act?"

"Certainly it is; and I thank you for reminding us of it; for I had well-nigh forgotten it," said Mr. Courtney. "You may add this mark also to your tablet; for nothing is more certain than that the members of these first Churches (which must ever be the pattern of the true Churches of Christ) became members with their own personal consent, and by their own voluntary act. Each one for himself 'gladly received the word.' They voluntarily 'consorted with' the company of the believers. They were not driven to it by the government, with fines, imprisonments, and stripes. They were not forced by the authority of parents, or of masters. They were not carried in while they were little helpless babes, and made Church members without their own knowledge or consent. Nothing is plainer than the fact that the members of Christ's Church were designed to be converted people—those who had been renewed in the temper and disposition of their minds—who had been regenerated by the power of God, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. They had been aliens, but now were sons. They had been in darkness, but now were light in the Lord. They had lived after the flesh, but now they lived after the Spirit. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new. Those who had thus been changed would love Christ and love his people, and desire to be associated with them. Such would desire the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and in their hearts would pray for its advancement. Such, and only such, could be with any propriety intrusted with the management of the business and the administration of the ordinances of the kingdom. Religion is a voluntary thing. Religion is

a *personal* matter. It has to do with personal opinions, personal feelings, and personal actions. No one can be religious by proxy. He must repent for himself, believe for himself, love the Lord Jesus for himself: and for himself he must obey, by submitting to baptism as the ordinance of Christ, and uniting with his Church as the people of Christ."

"I do not see," said the Doctor, "that there can be any objection to this test. We certainly did not find in the Scriptures any instance of involuntary Church membership."

Theodosia wrote in the tablet a fifth mark, namely:

"5th. Its members have become such by their own voluntary act."

"Now, what shall we say in regard to its doctrine?" asked the Doctor.

"That," replied Mr. Courtney, "is a much more difficult question than would at first glance appear; for, while all agree that there are certain fundamental doctrines, upon which the whole gospel system is based, it would take too much time, and would too much complicate our present investigation, to examine and determine precisely what they are, and just how far a Church may lose them, or depart from a full belief of them, without ceasing to be a true Church of Jesus Christ."

"There is, however," said Mr. Percy, "at least *one* doctrine which is involved in the very nature of the ancient profession of faith; and that is, the Divine nature and Messiahship of Jesus."

"So also," said Theodosia, "was the doctrine that man is a sinner, and Christ the only Saviour; for these ideas are both involved in penitence and faith."

"It will answer all our purposes," replied Mr. Courtney, "to say that a true Church of Jesus must believe and teach the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Christ. We shall not probably disagree about what these doctrines are, so far as to

make any difficulty in the way of applying our test; and if we happen to do so, the question can be settled then as well as now."

Theodosia added therefore this sixth mark :

"6 It holds, as articles of faith, the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Christ."

"We need now, it seems to me, but one thing," said Mr Percy, "to complete our tablet. It is not every association of Church members, or every *assembly* of Church members, that constitutes a Church of Christ. His Church was instituted for a specific purpose. It has certain objects in view: certain duties to perform; and it can only be regarded as a *Church*, when it is considered in its relation to these objects and duties."

"That is very true, sir. There may be associations or meetings consisting exclusively of real members of a true Church, and even including *all* the members of such a Church, organized for some secular or moral, or even for a religious purpose, and yet it would not be a Church.

"The ekklesia of Christ is not a mere association or assembly of his real and visible people; but it is an *official* assembly, for specific purposes, clearly designated in the Word.

"The jury is not a mere assembly of twelve men; or of twelve men properly qualified to be jurors; or of twelve actual jurors (when released from their official duties as jurors and) engaged in some other business. It is '*a jury*' only when properly qualified, duly organized and acting in its *official* capacity, in accordance with the laws of its existence. So the Church is not a mere assembly of Church members, when met together for any of the common or uncommon purposes of life; but only an official assembly, for the purposes enjoined in *the law* of the King, by whose authority it exists, and in whose name it acts."

"Do you mean to say," asked Theodosia, "that the Church

is in being only so long as it is in official session? Would a Church cease to be a Church when it is dismissed, and only become one again when it has again assembled?"

"Only in the same sense, madam, that our legislature ceases to be a legislature when it adjourns for dinner. Its members are still members, duly qualified and ready to act; but they *cannot* act as a legislature till they come together again as an *official* body. And if, in the interval, any of the members, or *all* of the members, had gone to a political meeting, and passed resolutions, or nominated candidates, or formed a temperance society, those would *not* have been acts of '*the legislature*,' and would have no legal sanction. So the Church, when it has been dismissed, still exists in the being and qualifications of its members; but it can perform no *Church action*, as the judiciary and executive in the kingdom of Christ, until it shall have come together as an *official body*. But we were about to inquire concerning the specific objects for which Christ's Church was constituted. These we must learn, as we have all that we know about the Church, from the teachings of the book. We must ascertain what the Church was *instructed to do*, and what the apostolic Churches actually *did*, in their official capacity, as Churches of Jesus Christ.

"This will not give us much trouble, after the examination we have already made. From the instructions which the Master gave to the offended brother, Matthew xviii., we have seen that one of its duties was to adjust disagreements which might arise among its members. From Acts i. 22, vi. 5, we learn that it was to choose its own officers. From Acts xi. 22, xiii. 3, we see that it was its province to set apart and send out missionaries. From 1 Cor. v. 13, we find it was to exclude the sinful and disorderly; and from 2 Cor. ii. 8, to restore such upon evidence of their repentance. From 1 Cor. xi. 20-34, we learn that it was to regularly observe the

ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in remembrance of him. From Rev. ii. 14, 15, that it was to take proper measures to preserve the purity of doctrine; and from 2 Thess. iii. 6, and 1 Cor. xi. 2, that it must maintain the ordinances in their purity, as it had received them."

"I think," said Mr. Percy, "we might sum up the whole matter in few words. The Church is the visible executive and judiciary of the kingdom. As the executive, it receives members, elects officers, ordains ministers, sends out evangelists, or missionaries, observes ordinances, and provides for the regular and public worship of God. As the judiciary, it settles disputes, excludes the disorderly, restores the penitent, condemns false doctrines, and does whatever is needful to preserve the peace and purity of its members.

"We have found no instance of its exercising *legislative* powers. It makes no new laws. It ventures not to repeal, or even modify, the laws of Christ: this were to invade the prerogative of the King.

"The only instance which *seems*, at first glance, like an act of legislation, is that in which the *apostles and elders* associated the Church with them in their decree about circumcision. Acts xv. 22, 23. But it was to the apostles and elders that the Church at Antioch had sent. And care is taken to show that the binding authority of the decree is not in the Church, but in the Holy Ghost. And from Acts xvi. 4 we learn, that although the *brethren* had been apparently associated with the inspired apostles and elders, yet *it was only in the sending of the messengers*; for the decree is here expressly called the decree of the *apostles and elders* which were at Jerusalem, as distinct and separate from the Church. *They* were inspired and fully authorized to *legislate*; but the *Church* could only execute the laws which the King had enacted, or might enact, through those whom he inspired to speak his words."

FIFTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

In which the Tablet is completed—The great difficulty—A new character.

WHEN our company had assembled on the morning of the fourth day, they found themselves surrounded by a group of eager listeners. The discussion had begun to excite great interest among the passengers. Even the irreligious were delighted to find something which would in some degree relieve the monotony of the tiresome voyage; and Church polity became a prominent subject of discussion in every part of the boat.

It must be admitted, however, that, except in the ladies' cabin, where Mr. Percy, Theodosia, and Mr. Courtney could speak for themselves, the party which they represented met with very little favor. The prevailing sentiment was, that *all* who professed faith in Christ, and obedience to his laws, belonged to his Church. And it was regarded a sufficient answer to any argument in favor of a strict adherence to the scriptural model, that if it were received, *it would at once unchurch some of these professors.*

Here is, in fact, the great difficulty in the way of the general reception of the truth in regard to this subject. Every professor of religion who has united with any religious society, fully believes that he is a member of Christ's Church; and his mind will receive nothing as truth which is opposed

to that belief. If you reason with him out of the Scriptures, and show him the New Testament model of a Church, and point out to him the utter discrepancy between his society and the institution of Jesus Christ, he may not attempt to reply. He probably will not, even in his own mind, try to reconcile the differences; but he will say to himself, "I am not able to understand all the teachings of the Scriptures, but I know that *my good minister*, and my dear brethren, and myself, *belong to the Church*; and any doctrine that turns us out is false." This is an impervious shield: no shaft of Scripture truth can penetrate it: no power of logic can wrest it from his hand. He will readily receive any theory of the Church which counts himself as a part of the Church, even though it should include the practical infidelity and open profligacy of material Christianity—all the abominations of Antichrist himself. But any theory, however scriptural, which excludes his darling self and those whom he esteems as honest Christian people, is to him a simple absurdity, about which it is not worth while to reason.

It is, nevertheless, a fearful truth, that all *cannot* be right. *If there be any Scripture pattern, men have departed from it at their peril.* Christ's Church must be what Christ established and enjoined upon his people to maintain. This is one definite and specific thing, plainly described and easily recognized in the Holy Word. And if Christ's people have been blinded by the mists and clouds of traditional error, and led astray by leaders blinded like themselves, he may forgive them: he will forgive them. But he makes it now their solemn and imperative duty to go back to THE BOOK, and "inquire for the old paths," and return to that organization which he established.

"Will you do me the kindness," asked the bishop of Tholosia, when they were seated around the table, "to let me see the little tablet you were making yesterday?"

"Certainly, sir."

He ran his eye down its several heads, and, directing his question to Mr. Courtney, asked what, according to those rules, would be his definition of the Church?

"*The Church*, sir," replied the schoolmaster, "*is the local and visible judiciary and executive of the kingdom of Christ* It consists of such members of the kingdom as have voluntarily associated together for the maintenance of the public worship of God, the observance of Christ's ordinances, and the execution of his laws. But, if I do not forget, we had not quite completed our tablet yesterday. When finished, it will read thus :

SIGNS OR MARKS BY WHICH TO KNOW A TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

- 1st. It consists only of professed believers in Christ.
- 2d. Its members have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.
- 3d. It is a local organization, and independent of all others.
- 4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Law-giver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.
- 5th. Its members have become such by their own voluntary act.
- 6th. It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Christ.

"Now, these gentlemen, who have been present all the time, will bear me witness that we have found each of these marks distinctly recognized in this HOLY WORD. The claimant to Church honors, which cannot show these marks, is therefore not a *scriptural* Church. It is not *the* Church which Christ established. It is not that Church which he founded on the rock of faith. It is not that Church which he authorized and ordained, to exercise the authority of his kingdom in his name "

"I do not feel disposed to discuss these positions with you," replied the bishop. This is no fitting time or place for such a discussion. I am willing to grant that *you* verily believe that you have, after careful and diligent search, discovered that these are the distinctive and peculiar marks of a true Christian Church, as laid down in the Scriptures. I am willing to grant that these intelligent ladies and gentlemen, who have so patiently listened to you, and seen you turn from chapter to chapter, and read the very verse on which your opinion rests, may have been compelled to agree with you; and yet I will show you that you have great cause to distrust your own conclusions.

"I suppose that you will not deny that you, as well as other men, are human, and, therefore, liable to err. I do not now say that you *are* wrong, but only intimate the possibility that you *may be* wrong. If you are right, the Church of Christ is a very insignificant affair. I do not know where it is. I have read no account of it. I have no certain knowledge of its existence; for I confess to you that I have not seen or heard of any body of people, claiming to be a Church, who unite in themselves *all* that I think would be demanded by that tablet. But if there be somewhere, in some secluded neighborhood, such an assembly, or, if in some strange country there should be a hundred or a thousand such assemblies, it is certain they have never been recognized as the Church of Christ by any but themselves; and when this little company of ignorant people, unknown to history, and unknown to scientific theology, sets up its claim not merely to be a *part* of the Church, but to be itself the Church, and the whole Church, and the only Church, against the countless thousands of the most devoted followers of Jesus, not in this age alone, but in all the past, from the days of the apostles down to the present hour, does it not seem, even to yourself, that it is *more likely* that you and your little company are wrong 20

that all the congregated and successive hosts of God have been mistaken?"

"If it were true," said Mr. Courtney, smiling, "that the multitude were always right, I would concede much to your suggestion. It might, in that case, be prudent for no man to go to *the Bible* for his religious faith, but simply to inquire what opinions are held by the *majority*. If we adopt this plan, we shall, as Christians, all be driven into Romanism; and then, as men, into idolatry; for I suppose at least two-thirds of all the race are worshippers of idols, and a vast majority of all professing Christians are Roman Catholics. For myself, I prefer to be guided by the teachings of Jesus and the apostles rather than by the vast and countless majority. I say with Paul, that even though 'an angel from heaven' teach any other doctrine than that which I find here in this Holy Book, let him be accursed. I dare not follow the multitude to do evil."

"Oh, no, my dear sir! you do not understand me. I do not deny that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. I am willing this question shall be tried by the Word; but what I say is this: You and your little company are more likely to be mistaken in *your understanding* of the Scriptures than all the multitudes of Christendom in every age. We must be governed by the Word; but is it the Word as *you* and your little company understand it? or as countless thousands of the people of God, as they are known to history, have understood it, and practiced it in every age? Is the faith of the ancient Church to go for nothing? Is the understanding of the Fathers to go for nothing? Is the practice of the holy martyrs to go for nothing? The Church of Christ, my dear sir, is not a verbal abstraction, to be gathered out of the Testament, and written down upon a tablet. It is a historical verity. We can trace it on the map of history from the earliest beginnings down to the present time. At

first a little stream, then a mighty river: at length a vast sea, and now a mighty ocean, which is, at last, destined to become a world-enveloping flood, which shall overwhelm all enemies and all opposers."

"Oh, yes!" replied Mr. Courtney, "I would like to talk to you an hour about this 'historical Church,' and, perhaps, it may come in our way presently. But I am afraid just now I shall forget your argument, which, if I understand you rightly, amounts to this: Every man is to go to the Scriptures to see what the Church is, but when he reads them he is not to understand them to mean that the Church is what *they say* it is; but he must take it for granted that they mean what the ancient historical Church says it is—what the Fathers say it is—and what the martyrs say it is. Now, the Fathers and the martyrs were, no doubt, very good people. They believed for themselves, and have gone to give account for themselves. You have the same word of faith which they had. You must believe for yourself, and God will hold you personally accountable for your faith and your practice. He charges you to found it on HIS WORD, and not on traditionary legends, or uninspired historical records of early Churches, Fathers, or martyrs.

"The fact is, sir, we do not know and cannot know with any considerable degree of certainty, what the fathers and the martyrs did believe and teach. Their writings have been mutilated and interpolated until they would now hardly recognize them; and history is often the mere record of traditions, and traditions are often mere old wives' fables. I want something better for my religious faith and practice to rest upon than the vague and contradictory accounts of the faith of ancient Churches, Fathers, and martyrs. Then, you say that *I, as an individual, may be mistaken*, and am, in fact, more likely to be mistaken than all good Christians of every age. I might grant this, and yet I should feel that *as I am*

personally responsible, I must personally examine and personally determine for myself in this as in other things. When I surrender my right to use my private judgment to determine for myself what the Scriptures teach, I will go to Rome and procure an infallible priest. Nothing less would answer my purpose. No other could take the whole responsibility.

"But I will meet you on your own ground. I will accept your historical test; for the truth is—and I will prove to you by *your own historians*—the constitution of the ancient Church and the faith and practice of the Fathers and the martyrs, in regard to this subject, was, down to the time of Cyprian, just such as is expressed in this tablet. I will go still farther. I will show you that it continued, down to the Reformation, to be the faith and practice of all those Christian communities which recognized the *Bible* as their authority, or which *permitted their people to read the Bible*. Now, if you ask me to receive the interpretation which any Church or any people give to the Scriptures, let it, I beseech you, be that Church and those people that *had* the Scriptures and *searched* the Scriptures, and were free to understand them according to the meaning of the language, and not those who were forbidden to read them, or to believe any thing different from their priests, on pain of death."

"Stop a minute, if you please, Mr. Courtney," interrupted Doctor Thinkwell. "Let us make this matter practical as we go along. I want to see just what bearing it has upon the matter in hand. I asked you to tell me which was the *true* Church of Jesus Christ. You proposed rather to *show* me than to tell me, and directed me to look for it in the Book. We have seen it there, as it was organized and established by Christ and the apostles. We have thus ascertained that it *was* a local company of baptized believers, voluntarily associated in accordance with Christ's law, to administer his ordinances and execute his laws. For the sake of convenient

reference, we have, as we ascertained from time to time some distinctive peculiarity of this Church, put it down in our tablet. We have thus far been guided entirely by the Scriptures. We have not been at all dependent on history or tradition. Now, if our tablet is complete, that is, if it has all the distinctive marks, or enough of the distinctive marks of a true Church to enable us to recognize one when our attention is directed to it, why should we complicate the issue by turning aside to explore a question of history? If it can be avoided, I do not want my faith to hang on any other testimony than the inspired record. *That* I can trust. Outside of that I am afraid to go. I do not care what other people think; I do not ask what they believe. It is nothing to me: I must decide for myself. I shall use my own judgment, and be determined by the teaching of the BOOK, as I understand its language. It seems to me, therefore, that we may, for the present at least, dispense with any historical testimony on either side of this question. I do not see why we cannot at once proceed to try the various claimants, and decide who it is that has the characteristic marks."

"It will, sir," replied Mr. Courtney, "be very possible to decide the matter without any other information but that which we can gather from the Scriptures on the one hand, and our own personal observation on the other; but, at the same time, it will be more satisfactory, where we have undoubted historical testimony bearing upon the case of any claimant, to bring it before our minds, in order that we may decide in full view of all the circumstances. Such testimony will, however, come in by the way, and may be omitted till the occasion calls for it."

"Then, please let us begin to make some practical application of the rules we have discovered. I am impatient to make some progress."

"Whom shall we try first?"

"I should think that the Roman Catholic Church, by virtue of her age, and the extent of her claims, is entitled to our first consideration. I suppose there is no one present who regards her as the true Church of Christ, but I would like to understand precisely the grounds upon which we are compelled to reject her."

"I do not much like," said Mr. Courtney, "to take any course which will exclude, or even appear to exclude, from our tablet any scriptural test which may be suggested; and as it is evident from the declaration of our Saviour to Peter, that 'the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church,' and from the various prophecies which represent his kingdom as a perpetual and increasing kingdom, that the Church of Christ, as he established it, must have continued ever the same in all that is essential to its being, I would gladly add such a historical test as will enable us to identify among ourselves the Church of the earliest fathers, and of the holy martyrs, whose testimony seems to be so highly prized by our friends that they set it above the literal meaning of the Word itself. It is true, we can recognize the Church without this mark; and it is also true, that to those whose knowledge of ecclesiastical history is limited it may be somewhat difficult of application; but it is not the less valuable to those who have the needful information. The *test itself* is simple and scriptural. The Church of Christ began with Christ. It did not exist before his day. It has existed ever since. Any organization claiming to be that Church, and yet originating a thousand years after it was established, cannot surely be what it claims. This is self-evident. And to *all those who know the origin* of the claimant, the argument is quite as valid and convincing as though it were in the power of the most ignorant to apply it as perfectly as themselves; and to those who do not know, it may be made available by reference to *unquestioned* historical authority. Consequently, though I would

be very unwilling to make it the *only* test, I cannot but regard it as a most certain and infallible one. And you will observe that we need not, in our application of the test, require of any claimant to *prove* an origin in the time of Christ. We are willing to take it for granted that each and all of those organizations which claim to be Christian Churches did begin with Christ, unless we can show for them a more recent origin. The history of most or all these claimants has been written by themselves, and this history gives *their own statement* of the time and place and manner of their beginning: now if we show the origin of each by their own account of themselves, I am sure none of them can reasonably complain."

"But do you not see another difficulty in the way of applying this test?" inquired the Doctor. "We have ascertained that a Church of Christ is a local and independent organization. Now, the Church that was organized somewhere last year began more than 1800 years after Christ, and, consequently, if your rule should be adopted, could not be regarded as a true Church of Christ."

"Not at all," said Mr. Courtney. "We are speaking now of the *institution* which Christ ordained and called his Church, and not of any particular individual *example* of that institution. If I say the jury was first established in England a thousand years ago, and has existed ever since, I do not deny that the jury which was empanelled yesterday was a real jury. To make it a jury, it is only necessary that it should be composed of similar materials and organized for the same purposes with its ancient English prototype. We use the word church in its generic sense. We are speaking of the executive body in the kingdom of Christ. That kingdom still exists as he set it up. It has the same Lord and the same laws. It has also the same ordinances and the same *executive*. That executive is the Church. The kingdom

cannot exist and be perpetuated without the Church, for it is the Church *only* that is authorized to *receive members* into the kingdom, either by her own act or that of officers appointed by her. Now, the kingdom has come down, by a regular succession of subjects, from generation to generation. There must have been, therefore, a regular succession of Churches to receive and cherish them. But these Churches must have been all formed upon the *same Scripture model*, and have been regular successors to each other. If we find at any time a *new* organization, with a *new constitution*, consisting of *different materials*, and governed by *different regulations* from the original Church, as established by Christ, then we can readily understand that it is not his Church, but some new thing that has come in its place. We do not say that the model Church which was at Jerusalem, or any other of the Churches which were founded in apostolic times, has continued to the present time, but only *that there have always been Churches formed upon the same model*. Those first Churches were not extinct till others were in being, descended from themselves, and having the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, the same objects, the same offices, the same character of members, and, like themselves, executing the laws and observing the ordinances of the kingdom. So I trust Mrs. Percy may add to her tablet this test, also, viz. :

“It began in the time of Christ, and has continued to the present time.”

“If you will permit me,” said Mrs. Percy, “to suggest one other mark, I would say that the Church of Christ can never be a *persecuting Church*.”

“That is true, madam,” said Mr. Courtney, “and since we have admitted one historical test, we need not object to receiving another; for, like the other, it will be very valuable to those who know enough of history to apply it.”

"But first," said the Doctor, "let us see whether it *has* like the others, the sanction of the Scriptures. We must not forget that this *alone* is our authority."

"Certainly," replied Mr Courtney. "The Scriptures teach that it should be a *persecuted* Church, but never itself a persecutor. It should *suffer* wrong, but not inflict it. If it were persecuted, the persecutors must be outside itself. The Church of Christ could never persecute itself. Its law was the law of *love*. The world might hate it, but it was to bless them that hated it. The world should kill and destroy it, but it should pray for them that spitefully entreated and persecuted it. The beast and the false prophet should make war upon it: the great dragon should seek to destroy it: the woman sitting on the beast should be drunken with the blood of the saints; and there *was* a power which should set itself in the place of God, and should '*wear out* the saints of the Most High' with the bitterest and most fearful persecutions; but the Church of Christ was not to persecute or retaliate upon her enemies. No New Testament Church was a persecutor, and there is no intimation that Christ's people ever should become persecutors. We may, therefore, very safely say, that whenever we find a claimant to Church honors upon whose skirts is found the blood of the saints, she is not a Church of Jesus Christ."

Theodosia added to her tablet this eighth mark: "It never persecutes for conscience' sake."

"Now," said Mr. Percy, "let me suggest one other mark, and then I think our tablet will be complete. It is also so far historical that it will require some knowledge of history to apply it, but it is most undoubtedly a scriptural test. It is this: No *apostate* Church can be a Church of Jesus Christ.

"Individual members who have hypocritically professed to take Christ for their King, may become apostates, and may go out or be cast out; as the apostle says, 'They went out

from us, because they were not of us.' Whole societies may by rejecting Christ's rule, changing his ordinances, or submitting to other rulers than Christ in matters of religion, place themselves without his kingdom; but in doing so they surely *cease to be Churches of Christ*. They may retain the name, but they are no longer what the name implies. They cannot be in his kingdom and out of it at the same time. They cannot be subjects of Christ while owning allegiance and yielding submission in religious things to other masters. Whenever a Church becomes apostate, and denies the faith or departs from the practice of the first Churches in any *essential particulars*, it ceases at that very moment to be a Church of Christ, and has no longer any authority as the executive of his kingdom. It is itself a rebel."

"I do not know so well about that," said Theodosia. "We find that the first Churches fell into very serious errors, both of doctrine and of practice; yet they were not at once disowned."

"You are both correct," said Mr. Courtney. "It is not every error in doctrine, or every departure from the simplicity of the practice of the first Church, that constitutes apostasy; but there are some doctrines and some practices which are incompatible with the very nature of the gospel, and if a Church embraces these it is an apostate, and is no longer a Church of Christ."

"The Church of Christ is everywhere in the Scripture represented as faithful and true. She never gives up her allegiance to her Lord. We read, indeed, that 'there should be a falling away,' but it was a falling away of the parasites who had attached themselves to the kingdom, and not of the kingdom itself. It was only the man of sin and the son of perdition, a dead and putrid mass of religious corruption, that fell off. There is no intimation that 'the Bride,' 'the Lamb's wife,' should forsake her faithfulness and abandon her Be-

loved. She was to be *tried*: she was to be persecuted: she was to be driven into the wilderness, (that is, into obscurity:) she was to be hidden from the eyes of the world for many a century; but she was always and ever to be a faithful, loving, and obedient wife. *She* was never to become the drunken bawd that sat upon the scarlet-colored beast, nor was she ever, like the offspring of that bawd, to become a harlot or the associate of harlots. If any people, therefore, calling themselves by the name of Christ, have at any time cast aside the peculiar characteristics of his people, *they are surely no longer to be counted as his people*. A Church which consists of *subjects* not designated by him, submits to *rulers* not authorized by him, and observes *ordinances* not commanded by him, *is not his Church*, whatever it may once have been. Christ has no *revolted*, no *rebel* Churches. When any Church rejects him as its sole King, it is no longer in his kingdom, and all its authority as his executive is gone. Its baptism is not the baptism of the kingdom, for it has no longer any right to admit members. Its ministry is not the ministry of the kingdom, for it is no longer authorized to ordain ministers. It may propagate its sentiments and perpetuate itself, but it cannot continue or originate a Church of Christ."

"One thought more," said Mr. Percy, "and then I think we are ready to proceed with the claimants. It is this: Whatever is *now* an essential characteristic of a true Church, has *always* been such since the Church was established. If, for example, the Church of Christ cannot persecute *now*, there never was a time when it could persecute; and if an apostate Church cannot be a Church of Christ now, there never was a time when a Church that had become apostate could have been authorized to administer the laws or ordinances of Christ's kingdom. If it be true that any Church which should *now* become *apostate* would, by that act, utterly incapacitate herself for the performance of any official act

under the authority of Christ, then it must be equally true that every Church that ever did at any time become apostate did, at the time of doing so, become incapable of conferring genuine baptism, or real ordination. In short, from the moment it ceased to be a true and genuine Church of Jesus Christ, according to the scriptural characteristics which we have ascertained, from that very moment all its official acts were null and void."

"It strikes me," said the Bishop, "that your search for the true Church will now be very much like looking for a cambric needle in a stack of hay. You have pruned her away on every side until she will be of necessity so small as to be almost or quite invisible. I confess I begin to feel a great curiosity to be present at the finding."

"I would like to see that Church which has had a visible and actual existence from the time of Christ, which has never persecuted, never temporarily apostatized, and which has *always* held the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; consisting in its membership *only* of those who have first believed, and then have been baptized, and by their own personal and voluntary act have become its members. I say, if there be any Church which embraces *all* these characteristics, I would like to see and become acquainted with it. But if I regarded myself as in any sense a party in this discussion, I should solemnly protest against the trial of my Church by any such rules."

"And so should I," said the Methodist, "for I see no necessity of such extreme strictness of construction. The people of God are those who love him and trust him. and wherever they assemble, there is a Church of God."

"That, in a *certain sense*, is true," replied Mr. Courtney, "but every assembly of those who love God is *not* THAT CHURCH to which Christ has committed the affairs of his *visible kingdom*. Every assembly of his people is *not* such

a Church as that which Christ established, and requires you, as an obedient subject of his, to unite with and sustain. *That* Church is a *peculiar assembly*; and if it has been described in the Book by such distinctive marks as we have discovered, your protest is simply a declaration that you are not willing to be tried by the Word of God. If there is *any one* of these marks which we have invented ourselves, and did not find plainly put down in the Book, tell us which it is, and we will at once blot it out of our tablet. You will surely admit that there is *some* way to know a true Church. If you can tell us of any better way than this, we will adopt it. But until some one can point out a more certain and reliable course, we must follow this. We have '*searched THE SCRIPTURES to see whether these things are so;*' and for myself, I know of no better and no other way to ascertain what the Church is, than to find it in the Scriptures."

"I want no other," said Dr. Thinkwell. "When God has spoken in his Word, I ask no other test of truth. I take the Bible, and the Bible alone, for my guide in all matters pertaining to religion. What I cannot find there I do not care for. What I do find there I trust I shall be found willing always humbly to receive and joyfully to obey. I acknowledge that I had no idea that there was so much in the Word concerning this matter. I had fancied, since I found so many and such different opinions among professed Christians, that the Scriptures must have been very indefinite, and have left the whole subject undetermined. But I find it is not so. These which we have found were certainly characteristics of the Churches of the apostolic days. I do not know whether there are any Churches *now* that have these same characteristics or not; but if there be *but one*, and that so lowly and despised that the world does not so much as know it by name, with that Church I will, if possible, unite, and help, so far as God may give me strength, to build it up. I can never

be contented with any human substitute for what my Lord himself ordained. Nor do I see why any people who love Jesus, and desire to obey *his* laws, should hesitate to bring their Church organization any more than their faith or their practice to the Bible, and try it by the simple teachings of inspiration. And now, Mr. Courtney, if you are not weary, let us bring some one of the claimants to the Book, and try it. I am anxious to make some visible progress. We have spent several days merely in arranging preliminaries. I hope we can now get on more rapidly."

"I have been so much interested in the preliminaries," said Theodosia, "that I had almost forgotten for what purpose we were arranging them."

"Well, we are now ready for the application, and will first see how THE CHURCH OF ROME will look, when we examine her in the light of the Holy Word. Does she look like the Church of Jesus? Has she the signs and marks which Christ has put upon the executive of his kingdom?"

"Would it not be better to postpone our examination of this claimant until to-morrow?" asked Mr. Percy. "We cannot tell how long it may require, and it is most likely we shall all grow weary before we get through. There is danger that, in our impatience to reach some tangible result, we shall hurry over some matters which should not be lightly passed, or overtask the patience of these friends, who seem to feel an interest in the subject almost equal to our own."

"You are right," said the Doctor. "I am myself weary already with the long sitting of to-day; but when we meet in the morning, let it be understood that we are to waste no further time on preliminaries."

SIXTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

In which the Church of Rome is tried by the Scripture tests, and found to be no Church of Christ.

WHEN the party had collected the next morning, they entered at once upon the subject, like people anxious to get through with a long-anticipated task.

Mr. Courtney commenced the conversation by saying, "Be kind enough to let us have the tablet, Mrs. Percy, to refresh our memories. This, you will all remember, is its only use. We have found certain things in the Scriptures concerning the Church; and when we were sure they were *there*, we entered them *here*, merely for the convenience of reference, and in order to give some system to our application of the Scripture teachings. Mark this: *We do not try the Churches by our tablet, but by the SCRIPTURE TESTS, of which our tablet is a mere memorandum.* We found—

"1st. That the Church of Christ, according to the Scriptures, consists only of professed believers in Christ, and *not of believers and their children.* [See pp. 138 to 149.]

"2d. That its members have all been *baptized* upon profession of their faith. [See pp. 149 to 156.]

"3d. We found the Church to be a local and independent organization, and not a great collective ecclesiastical establishment, consisting of many societies subordinated to each other, or to a common head. [See p. 156 to 157.]

"4th. We found that while it was subject in all things to Christ as its king and lawgiver, it neither made laws for itself, nor submitted to any others but those of Christ. [See pp. 158 to 160.]

"5th. We found that its members became such, not by compulsion or restraint, but freely and voluntarily by their own personal act. [See pp. 160 to 162.]

"6th. We found that the Scripture Churches held certain peculiar *doctrines*, which of necessity are contained in the very enunciation of the gospel. [See p. 162 to 163.]

"These tests we can apply without any other knowledge of the different claimants than we can gain by our personal observation of the professions and the practices of each. By these the question, which is the Church, can be readily settled without any acquaintance with the *past history* of the several claimants. But as the Church of Christ was the subject of prophecy, and we can, in Scripture, see not only the peculiarities which it *then* possessed, but those which *it should exhibit in all coming time*, we availed ourselves of this circumstance, and looked into the glass of prophecy for some peculiar features, and must look into that of history to see the correspondence. Thus we found—

"7th. That Christ foretold his Church, which began with him, should be perpetual; and the true Church, therefore, is one which has not been destroyed or overcome by Satan and the gates of hell. [See pp. 174 to 176.]

"8th. It appeared evident to us, moreover, that the Church of *Jesus*, the executive of *his* laws, could never be a *persecuting* Church. [See pp. 176 to 177.]

"And lastly, we found, 9th, that no apostate Church could be the true Church of Christ, nor have any authority within his kingdom. [See pp. 177 to 179.]

"These marks belong to every true Church of the Lord **Jesus Christ** That claimant which cannot show them we

must reject. We need not care what she may be called. We need not ask how numerous or how intelligent or how *pious* her membership may be, for it is not numbers or intelligence or piety that constitutes a Church. To be a Church of *Christ*, it must consist of such people as HE *has designated*—that is of baptized believers. It must be *organized* according to his instructions, and in conformity to the models which HE furnished in the Scriptures, and in doctrine and practice as an official body it must be conformed to HIS laws. Now, if even a very numerous body of very intelligent and very pious people have associated themselves together as *Christians*, and yet *not in accordance* with the Master's instructions concerning his Church, they cannot be regarded as his Church. Theirs is *not* the institution to which Christ, as King, intrusted the executive authority of his kingdom; and if they attempt to exercise it, they are (though it may be unconsciously, yet no less truly) usurpers and rebels. They may be the friends of the King. They may, in their hearts, wish well to the kingdom. They may earnestly strive to promote the invisible extension of the kingdom in the hearts of men. They may believe on Christ to the salvation of their own souls, and be the means of bringing thousands of others to believe and to be saved; but THOSE ORGANIZATIONS *into which they are incorporated* are no more the Churches of Christ than if they were not called by that name. To be *his Churches*, they must not only consist of *his people*, but be organized upon *his* constitution, and governed in *their official* acts by *his* rules."

"Certainly," exclaimed the Doctor, "we all understand that. We have collected out of the *Scriptures* the *scriptural* marks or characteristic peculiarities of a *scriptural* Church, and all that now remains for us to do is to apply them fairly and honestly, without fear or favor, to the several claimants which ask to be recognized and treated as the Churches of Jesus. If any one will not be tried by these scriptural tests

we may, it seems to me, regard *that fact* as in itself a sufficient reason to reject its claims, since it is evident that no Church of Christ could be unwilling to bring herself up to the requirements of her Lord, as laid down in his Word. And now *please* do not let us spend any more time on the preliminaries, but go at once into our work."

"Let me," said the Bishop, "suggest—not for the purpose of embarrassing your inquiries, (you have made your path sufficiently narrow already,) but merely to show that you are not yet quite ready—that you have in your tablet taken no notice of the *officers* or *ministers* of the Church. You have not inquired whether there are in the true Church one order, or two orders, or three orders of the ministry."

"Nor," replied Mr. Courtney, "have we any need to do so now, since this subject will necessarily come up when we come to apply our *fourth test*; for if Christ did not appoint prelatial bishops, then the Church that *submits herself* to the *rule* of such bishops has gone out from the fold of the gospel order, and submitted to the authority of other lords than Christ. By doing so she ceased to be a Church of Christ, and became the Church of the bishops: so, as *episcopos* signifies a bishop, your Church is rightly named the '*Episcopal*,' that is, the *bishops'* Church.

"I will merely say, however, at this time, that the Church at Jerusalem was a Church competent to receive members and administer the ordinances before she had any *deacons*; and we read in Acts xiv. 23, of Churches which seem to have existed without any *elders* or presbyters, from which I infer that a Church may *exist* without *any* officers until it can *choose* its deacons and its pastor, and have them properly ordained. It is not complete, but still *it is a Church*, and has within itself the authority to perfect its organization by the *election* from its own members of a pastor to minister in the Word, and deacons to minister in its temporal affairs. But

we will have occasion to look at this again as we progress with our investigations. And we are now ready, Doctor, to go on as you requested, and apply our tests to the boldest and most arrogant of all the claimants to Church honors. How is it with the Church of Rome? Does she consist only of believers?

"Certainly not. Her members are almost all made members in their *infancy*, without personal faith or any pretence that it exists. And, unlike the American Presbyterians and Methodists, Rome does not in practice repudiate her theory, and virtually disown her members till they give evidence of conversion, or at least of a desire to escape from hell. She counts them as having been made Christians in fact, as they were in form, by the ceremonial mummary of their baby baptism. In that, they say, they were regenerated and made members of Christ, and of his Church, before any act of personal faith in Christ was possible. Even, therefore, though we should concede that all her adult members are real believers in Christ, yet she embraces in her membership thousands and thousands who, so far from being qualified to act their part in the transaction of the business of Christ's kingdom, do not so much as know their right hand from their left. Apply your second test. Have her members all been baptized?"

"Our answer to that question," replied the Doctor, "must depend upon our decision of another, and that is, *What is baptism?* If sprinkling a little babe is baptism, then they have been baptized: if only the immersion of a believer is baptism, then they have not been baptized. You will remember that I doubted the propriety of introducing this test, (if it could have been avoided,) on the ground that it would subject us to the necessity of going over the whole field of the baptismal controversy."

"We need do nothing of the kind, sir," replied Mr. Courtney. "The Roman Catholic Church has never *pretended* that sprinkling was valid baptism, only so far as it was made such *by the Pope*, or by '*the Church*.' That it was immersion which Christ commanded, which the first Churches practiced, and which was everywhere and always practiced (except in supposed cases of necessity) for over thirteen hundred years, no Roman Catholic will pretend to deny. It remained for Protestants, for men professing a purer Christianity, and a more sacred regard to the authority of the Scriptures and the truth of history; it remained for Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists, to distort and falsify history, and pervert and mystify the Scriptures, in order to obtain at least some shadow of support for the sprinkling ceremony which they have substituted for the baptism of the New Testament. The Roman Church felt no necessity for such a course. She asked no *Scripture* sanction. The decree of a council or the bull of a pope is all the authority which she requires. It is on *such* authority, and *only* on such, that she has openly and *avowedly* substituted sprinkling for immersion. She makes no secret of the business; she openly and boldly declares, in the face of God and man, that she *has changed* the rite; that though Christ commanded and the first Churches practiced *immersion*, yet she had the right to *change* laws and ordinances, and she *has* changed *this* to sprinkling or pouring. She will tell you *when* she changed it, and give you the reasons *why* she changed it; and she habitually and justly taunts the sprinkling Protestants with having adopted *her* rite, instead of the baptism of Christ and the Scriptures, while they pretend to disown her authority and submit only to that of the written Word

"The only question for us to decide is, therefore, whether the popes and councils of the Church of Rome had any

right to abolish the ordinance of Christ, and in its place to substitute another, bearing the same name indeed, but altogether different from it in form and in fact?"

"There can surely be no hesitation about the proper decision of *that* point," replied the Doctor. "But are you sure that the facts are as you have stated?"

"If I had not been, I should not have stated them. But I do not ask you to receive them on my authority. I will point you to the means of verifying, to the satisfaction of the most incredulous, the fact as I have stated it.*

"1. I might refer you to the statements of ecclesiastical history. What says Neander? What says Mosheim? What says Scharf? What say the Magdeburg Centuriators? What says every learned and candid historian, whether he be himself an immersionist or sprinkler, who has carefully investigated the subject?

"No one can carefully read what they have collected on this point, and not be ready to say, with that eminent Pedobaptist, Professor Stuart, 'It is a thing made out, namely the ancient practice of immersion. So, indeed, all the writers who have thoroughly investigated the subject conclude. I know of no one usage of ancient times which seems to be more clearly made out. I cannot see how it is possible for any candid man who examines the subject to deny this.'

"2. I might refer you to those massive monuments of the ancient practice, the baptisteries, with their immense artificial pools deep enough to swim in; and I ask for what purpose they could have been constructed, at so much cost and labor, if baptism had not been immersion.

"3. I might refer you to the otherwise inexplicable fact that in the Roman Catholic Church, for many ages, adults

* The reader is respectfully desired to turn back to page 159 of the first volume of *Theodosia*, and read again, in connection with the subject, the chapter on the introduction of sprinkling.

and children, male or female, were always divested of their clothing when about to be baptized. 'Revolted as this custom was,' says Stuart, 'yet it is as certain as testimony can make it.'

"But I need not try to prove what the party concerned has never pretended to deny, namely, that immersion was the original baptism, and that it was so recognized and practiced by the Church of Rome, and that, by the authority of the popes and councils, it has been changed to pouring and sprinkling.

"That very learned Roman Catholic, Doctor F. Brennen, in his work on the history of baptism, says, expressly, that such has been the case. Dr. Chase gives the following translation, of the first paragraph of what Brennen presents as a

'SYNOPTICAL VIEW OF ANCIENT TIMES AND MODERN IN RESPECT TO BAPTISM, [AMONG THOSE WHO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAPAL AUTHORITY.]'

'FORMERLY.

'Thirteen hundred years baptism was generally and ordinarily an immersion of the person under water; and only in extraordinary cases a sprinkling or pouring with water; the latter as a mode of baptism was, moreover, called in question; ay, even forbidden.'

'AT PRESENT.

'Now baptism is generally and ordinarily a pouring of the person with water; and only in the Church of Milan immersion still continues, as something peculiar to this Church alone, and extraordinary; elsewhere it would be punishable.'

"Bossuet, the famous Roman Catholic Bishop of Meaux, says: 'We read not in Scripture that baptism was otherwise administered, [than by immersion,] and we are able to make it appear, by the *acts of councils and by the ancient rituals*, that for THIRTEEN HUNDRED YEARS baptism was thus administered throughout the whole Church as far as possible.'

"Again, speaking of the fact that baptism is immersion, and

was thus given by Christ and practiced by the apostles: 'Though these are incontestable truths, yet neither we, [Roman Catholics,] nor those of the pretended reformed religion, hearken to the Anabaptists, who hold immersion to be essential and indispensable; nor have either they or we feared to *change* this dipping, as I may of the whole body, into a bare aspersion or infusion on one part of it.' In another work, in which he is defending the Roman Catholic usage of denying the cup to the laity in communion, he makes the following argument: 'Baptism by immersion, which is as clearly established in the Scriptures as communion under two kinds can possibly be, has, nevertheless, *been changed into pouring* with as much ease and as little dispute as communion under one kind has been established; for there is the same reason why one should be preserved as the other. It is a fact most firmly believed by the reformed, (though some of them at this time wrangle about it,) that baptism was instituted to be administered by plunging the body entirely in; that Jesus Christ received it in this manner, and it was thus performed by his apostles; that the Scriptures are acquainted with no other baptism; that antiquity understood and practiced it in this manner; and that to baptize is to plunge: these facts, I say, are unanimously acknowledged by all the reformed [Protestant] teachers, by the reformers [Protestants] themselves; by those who best understood the Greek language and the ancient customs of both Jews and Christians; by Luther, by Melancthon, by Calvin, by Casaubon, by Grotius, with all the rest, and, since their time, by Jurieu, the most ready to contradict of all their ministers. Luther has even remarked that this sacrament is called *Tauf* in German, on account of the depth; because they plunged deeply in the water those whom they baptized. If, then, there is in the world a fact absolutely certain, *it is this*. Yet it is no less certain that with all these authors baptism without immersion is consid

ered lawful, and that the Church properly retains the custom of pouring; and *the Church*, in supporting these two customs which tradition proves are equally indifferent, has not done any thing unusual, but maintained against troublesome persons that authority upon which the faith of the ignorant rests'

"In perfect accordance with these are many other Roman Catholic writers and teachers. They all admit and are ready to prove (if necessity require) that Scripture baptism was immersion, and was so received and practiced; but as the *external act* was not of the essence of the sacrament, the Church had the right, and has employed it, to *change* the rite, and substitute the aspersion of a part of the body for the immersion of the whole.

"If, in the face of these open concessions of their own most eminent men, a single doubt remains that the Roman Church has changed Christ's rite and put another in its place, that lingering doubt will be removed by the simple fact that all the industrious research of the learned Dr. Wall could find no instance of any pretended baptism by sprinkling or pouring among the early Christians, except in cases of supposed *necessity* from dangerous sickness; and no country, which had not been under the dominion of the Pope, in which this substitution had been made. 'All those countries,' he says, 'in which the usurped power of the Pope is or has formerly been owned, have left off dipping of the children in the fonts, but all other countries in the world, which had never regarded his authority, do still use it.'

"If any shadow of a doubt should still remain, it must surely be dispelled by the account which Catholics themselves have given of the time and manner, when and how, the *change* was made.

"Mr Robinson has gathered from their Latin documents the following facts:

“In the year seven hundred and fifty-three, Astulphus, King of the Lombards, oppressed the city of Rome. Pope Stephen the III. fled into France to implore the assistance of Pepin, who had been lately elected king. He, whom many considered as a usurper, availed himself of this event, and with the address of a great politician turned it to his own advantage. He examined with profound reverence *a letter which Saint Peter had written and sent him from heaven* by the hands of Stephen to persuade him to assist the Church. He promised instantly to execute the celestial commission, and he fulfilled his promise by freeing Italy from the Lombards, by replacing Stephen, and richly endowing the Church. Stephen was not ungrateful to his benefactor. He sanctified his title to the crown by giving the royal unction to Pepin in the Church of St. Denis, made him the first anointed sovereign in Europe, and denounced an anathema on the French if they should ever bestow their crown on any other family than that of Pepin. Stephen resided in France all winter, and had a severe fit of sickness, occasioned by the fatigue of journeying and the perplexity of his affairs, from which, however, he soon recovered.

“During his residence in the monastery of St. Denis, he introduced the Roman ritual. In the spring of the next year, seven hundred and sixty-four, in answer to some monks of Cressy, who privately consulted him, he gave his opinion on nineteen questions, one of which is allowed *to be the first authentic law for administering baptism by pouring*, and which in time was interpreted to signify sprinkling. The question proposed was, whether, *in case of necessity*, occasioned by the illness of an infant, it were lawful to baptize by pouring water out of the hand or a cup on the head of the infant? Stephen answered: If such a baptism were performed in such *a case of necessity* in the name of the Holy Trinity, it should be held valid.

"The learned James Basnage (a Roman Catholic antiquary) makes several very proper remarks upon this canon, as, that 'Although it is accounted the first law for sprinkling, yet it doth not forbid dipping; that it allows sprinkling only in case of imminent danger; that the authenticity of it is denied by some Catholics; that many laws were made after this time in Germany, France, and England, to compel dipping, and without any provision for cases of necessity; therefore, that this law did not alter the mode of dipping in public baptisms, and that it was not till five hundred and fifty-seven years after, that the legislature in a council at Ravenna, in the year thirteen hundred and eleven, declared dipping or sprinkling indifferent.'

"It is not denied that pouring and sprinkling had in case of necessity been employed before this, but it was done without *legal authority*, and it was ever doubtful whether it were valid baptism. It was, however, legalized in *cases of necessity* by Pope Stephen the III., and in all cases by the popish council at Ravenna."

"I do not think," said the Doctor, "that we need spend any more time on this point. If any thing can be made certain by testimony, it seems to be certain that this Church once baptized by immersion, and now do it by pouring or sprinkling. If the *first* was the baptism commanded by Christ, they have abolished it, and substituted another act; and so are now no Church. If the first was *not* the baptism commanded by Christ, then they were for ages without baptism, and were, consequently, no Church."

"But," said Theodosia, "they were no Church even though their *act* of baptism had been the scriptural act. They would have been no Church, according to our test, though they had been immersed, unless it had been done upon a personal profession of their faith. We found in our examination of the Scriptures not *only* that all were *baptized* before they were

counted as members of Christ's Church, but they were *not* baptized until *after they had made profession of their penitence and faith*. So far, therefore, as these or any other people have been baptized before they believed, they are not scriptural Church members. The *immersion* of an unconscious babe is no more gospel baptism than the *sprinkling* of such a babe."

"Perhaps you are right," said the Doctor; "I will think of that hereafter. Let us now go on to our third test.

"Is the Roman Catholic Church a local and independent society of baptized believers, or is it a great establishment embracing many local societies? To ask the question is to answer it. Everybody who knows any thing of this hierarchy is familiar with the fact that each of all its thousands of local congregations is but a part of the great combination called the Roman Catholic Church, the central power of which is in the city whose name it bears, or rather in the Pope, wherever he may be; and it is very certain that we found no prototype of any such a Church in the New Testament. The Church of which we saw so many examples there was in every instance independent of all other Churches. It was never itself subjected to any other Church, or to all the other Churches; nor did it in any single instance demand or receive subjection from all others, or from any other, to itself. And even though we should admit the existence of a scriptural universal Church, that Church must be made up of scriptural Churches. If the single Churches were independent local bodies, the great collective Church must be made up of just such independent bodies. The whole could not consist of different materials from the parts of which it was composed. No great confederation of so-called Churches can be, therefore, in this general sense, the Church of Christ, unless each member of that confederation be itself a Church complete within itself, and as a Church entirely independent."

of the confederation of which it may be supposed to make a part. Even though we should conceive of something the parts of which are Churches, and the whole combined the Church, and call this conception the visible Church universal, it could embrace within its limits no ecclesiastical establishment consisting of local societies subordinate to some national central power, or even subordinate to each other. If the visible Church of Christ considered as a local organization is complete and independent within itself, then his visible Church considered collectively must be composed *only* of such local and independent societies. The whole can embrace no more than all its parts. But let us go on to apply our fourth test. Has the Roman Church any lawgiver but Christ? Does she recognize any authority but his above her own?"

"Surely not," exclaimed Mr. Percy, "if by the Church you mean the whole establishment, including the popes and cardinals, bishops and priests! The Church of Rome admits no power above herself, and does not hesitate to abrogate and change even the laws of Christ. But if you mean to ask whether any one of those local congregations which are called Roman Catholic Churches recognizes any authority but Christ's above its own, that is another question."

"Our friend the Doctor," replied Mr. Courtney, "is looking for the visible Church of Christ. He desires to join it. He can only unite with it as a local assembly. In fact, we have already settled that the Church of Christ *is* a local assembly, and nothing more. The question, therefore, which we have to decide is, whether any of the so-called *local Churches* which may come before our observation are Churches of Jesus Christ; and if we find any such Church, which *as a Church* recognizes the authority of any power but Christ's outside itself to make laws for it, or to exercise discipline for it, or over it, that Church is not a Church of Christ. It has rejected Christ as its sole King, and submitted itself to

other lords. It is not *Christ's* executive, but, so far as it exercises any authority, it carries into effect the laws of *some other*; or, what is worse, it abandons the exercise of all authority, and tamely *submits* to the government of fallible men. So far from being herself the administrator of the laws of Christ, exercising under him the supreme authority of his kingdom in regard to its own membership; so far from deciding for herself, according to Christ's law, whom she will admit and whom she must exclude, whom she will have to minister in holy things, and by what means she can best enforce her Lord's requirements, she leaves all this to a minister, a priest, a bishop, a pope, a council, a conference, a presbytery, or some other controlling power, which she, *as a Church*, recognizes as having authority to determine for her, and to which she *as a Church* is under obligations to submit. Now, the local Roman Catholic society is subject to the priest; it is subject to the bishops; it is subject to the councils; it is subject to the Pope; and if it should have the unheard-of temerity to appeal to the Scriptures, determine their meaning for herself, and, in obedience to what she thought to be the law of Christ, reject the authority of these human rulers and lawgivers, she would be at once disowned and cast out. She would be no longer a Roman Catholic Church.

“She is not as a Roman Catholic Church free to examine and decide for herself what are the requirements of Jesus, as the King in Zion, and carry them into effect; but she must believe and do what is required by the Pope. As a Church she has no power to say who shall be her members, who shall be admitted to or who excluded from her communion. As a Church she cannot choose her ministers, nor refuse the most abject submission to such as it shall please her human masters to place over her. The popes and councils make laws for her, and the bishops exercise discipline for her. She is •

slave, whose only duty is to obey unquestioningly every command, not of Christ, but of men who have taken it upon themselves to lord it over God's heritage

"But now, if you look at the Roman Catholic Church as a great collective body, and inquire if this hierarchy has Christ alone for its Lawgiver and King, the answer must be no. She makes laws for herself. The decrees of her councils are of equal authority with the commands of Jesus. She is not the simple executor of the laws of Christ, but she has taken upon herself to change his laws and his ordinances, *refusing* to obey him, and requiring obedience to her own enactments. The Pope is to her the king and lawgiver, and what the *Christ* has commanded, her members are not even permitted to inquire for themselves.

"If now we apply our fifth test, and ask if her members have become such by their own voluntary act, the answer must be no. With very few exceptions, they were made such without their own knowledge or consent. They were made members by the acts of others before they were capable of understanding any thing about the matter.

"If you should take a pen, put it in the hand of a babe, and take hold of his fingers and guide his tiny hand in such a way that it should write its signature to a deed of gift conveying to the Church his whole inheritance, that act would be as much the act of the child, as is the act by which he is made to give *himself* to the Church. It is no act of his. He is made a member not only without his desire, but without his consciousness. The members of the Scripture Churches were not made thus. They heard the Word: they were pricked in their hearts: they believed in Christ: they rejoiced in hope; and then they of their own accord consorted with the people of God. This is, therefore, no Church, because its members were not made such by their own desire, or even with their own consent.

“ Does it, in accordance with our sixth test, hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel? Is salvation, in her formulas made to depend on grace, through faith, or is it made to rest on *works*: on the observance of *forms* and conformity to the *ceremonies* prescribed by the Church? No one familiar with her ritual can doubt. The child is *made a Christian* by its baptism; and as it grows up must complete the work of salvation by confessions and penances, genuflexions and fastings, and the like. Here is no recognition of the sacrifice of Christ *once* offered for the sins of the world, and now available to every one who believes. Salvation is only to be found *in the Church*, and only to be received at the hands of the *priests*, and that by the use of certain forms. We need not take time to show her errors in detail. We need not speak of the adoration of images and supplications to saints. It is enough for us to know that she has so far changed the gospel plan of saving sinners that she cannot give the same directions to the convicted and anxious inquirer after salvation which the apostles did, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’

“ Seventh. Did it begin in the time of Christ, and has it continued to the present time? There is no doubt that in the time of the apostles a Church of Christ was founded at Rome. There is no doubt that it continued for a time to be a *true Church*. At first it was composed only of baptized believers, who had ‘been buried with Christ by baptism,’ and whose ‘faith was spoken of throughout the world.’ It was at first and for several generations a simple local assembly, which claimed no authority over other Churches, and submitted itself to no authority but that of Christ. It took the law of Jesus for its guide and in all questions of doctrine or of duty appealed to *that alone*. So long as this continued, it was a Church of Christ. Had it continued thus until the present, we should rejoice to recognize it now as a *true*

Church of Christ, which had existed from the earliest days. But she did not continue thus. At an early day she began to recognize the authority of rulers whom Christ had not appointed; she submitted to laws which Christ had not enacted; she introduced members whom Christ had not authorized; and from that time she ceased to be a Church of Christ. She was still called by his name, but she was no longer his; she had become apostate, and, by doing so, had lost all right to act as his executive. She became the seat of sin, the very throne of Satan. She shed the blood of the saints by thousands upon thousands. She changed the ordinances of Christ, and showed herself to be the very 'Antichrist,' the 'man of sin' and 'son of perdition,' foretold in the Word. So long as she retained her first estate, she was a Church of Christ; when she entered the second, she was the Church of Rome, and in the course of time she styled herself the Roman Catholic or *universal* Church. The exact date of her transformation from a Church of Christ to Antichrist is not now easy to determine; but she was certainly no Church of Christ from that day when she first imbued her impious hands in the blood of those whom she slew for the testimony of Jesus. In her present form as a religious *hierarchy*, and with her present constitution and character of membership and order of ministry, she dates her beginning long after the time of Christ. In his day, or that of the apostles, no such religious establishments were dreamed of. The Church of Christ, as we have seen, was not a hierarchy, and of course no hierarchy *could* be his Church. And so even if this immense establishment had existed from before the death of Christ, it could have been no Church of his, for his Church was *not* such an establishment, but a simple local, independent society. We know, however, from undoubted historical records, that it was at least as late as the second century before the Church of Christ at Rome gave place to the Roman hierarchy;

so that she has not even this claim to be a true scriptural Church.

“Then, if we apply our eighth test, and ask if she has ever *persecuted* for conscience’ sake, all history will testify that she was for ages drunken with the blood of the saints. When was there a day that she did not persecute? In every age, and every country, where she has had the power, she has tortured, and tormented, and destroyed all who ventured to obey Christ rather than Rome. It is somewhat remarkable that, though she has sometimes killed Jews and Pagans for their religion, her chief cruelties have been inflicted on those who claimed to be the followers of Jesus: who studied God’s holy Word for themselves, and who would not recognize her authority above that of their Lord. They said that a corrupt apostate Church had lost all authority as the executive of the kingdom of Christ, and therefore that Baptism conferred by her ministers, and on her authority, was no Christian baptism and they could not receive it as such. They consequently baptized those who came to them from the Roman Church, even though they had been immersed by the priests. This Rome declared was the horrible sin of rebaptizing, or Anabaptism, and those who practiced it were called by them the Anabaptists. It is remarkable also that these Anabaptists could not find any authority in the Word for the baptism of children. They said Christ did not command it, for no such command can be discovered in the Book. They said Christ did not practice it; no more did the apostles; for no instance of its performance can be discovered in the Book. And since there was no *Scripture* for it, they could not practice it as a religious ordinance. They consequently, while they dedicated their children to God, and carefully educated them in a knowledge of his Word, yet did not dare to mock God by conferring on them the baptism which Christ had appointed only for those who had repented and believed. For these things

they were anathematized. For these things they were fined, imprisoned, scourged, tortured, beheaded, drowned, and burned by the '*Holy Catholic Church*' of Rome. For these things they are to-day fined, and imprisoned, and tormented, in every Catholic country where the Church *has the power*, and dares to use it. It is mainly by the curses which were denounced against them, by the instructions given for their extirpation, and the reasons given why they must be destroyed from the earth, that we can trace the history of the true Churches, from the time that the Roman hierarchy was established. The history of *that hierarchy* is minutely recorded, and *that* is called the history of the Church! But the true Churches of Christ have scarce a name for many ages. We might have been left to doubt of their existence, did not these decrees, which denounced them as the most fearful of heretics, and the record of the bloody executions by which these decrees were so remorsefully enforced, attest their continuous existence. But, as it is, we can recognize them in every age, and many lands. We can trace them by the streams of blood which they shed for the testimony of Jesus; and see them by the light of the fires by which their bodies were consumed, because they would not forsake their King, give up the liberty with which Christ had made them free, and subject their conscience to the rule of Rome. They boldly asked, 'What has the emperor to do with our religion?' They knew, in matters of religion, no other king but Jesus. They were governed by *his Word*; and this was their unpardonable crime. They would not obey the Pope: they would not heed the decrees of councils: they had the Word of God; that they could not disobey; its authority was supreme, and its instructions were complete. What need had they of popes and councils to teach them the law of Christ? And what right had popes and councils to change or abrogate the laws of Christ? They were Christ's freemen, and would not, nay

they could not, bow their necks to the yoke of Roman Catholic bondage, or bow their knee to Roman Catholic authority. And Roman Catholic authority, after 'the Church' had secured the alliance and control of the civil power to enforce her decrees, was not lightly to be cast off. Not the blood of individual offenders alone could satiate her vengeance; though countless thousands perished thus alone in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and in the flames of the '*auto da fé*;' but whole provinces were laid waste by fire and sword, and all the population, men and women, innocent maidens and little, helpless infants, consigned to indiscriminate and murderous death—death made most terrible by all the atrocities which the most diabolical cruelty and most satanic ingenuity could possibly devise, to add to its horrors. The Church of Rome can count her victims, not by thousands nor by hundreds of thousands, but by millions; and these not Jews, rejecting Christ; not Pagans, bowing down to dumb idols; but believers in Jesus—baptized believers, meeting, like the early Christians, in their local churches, and organized upon the Scripture model; whose only crime was that they chose to obey Christ rather than the Pope. They would not acknowledge that Rome had any right to rule where Christ alone was King. They would not acknowledge the baptism of Rome, and would not baptize their children till they gave evidence of penitence and faith."

"If it will not give you too much trouble," said Theodosia, "I would like to hear some of the particulars of the Catholic persecutions. I know they are many; and some of them have been very destructive and cruel; but I have in my mind rather a general conception of nameless horrors, than any of the details of cruelty and death which you have referred to in such general terms."

"I fear," said Doctor Thinkwell, "that if we enter upon the particular acts of persecuting cruelty on the part of this

Church, it will consume too much of our time. I have given some little attention to this matter, and can assure you that the history of her persecutions is, in a great degree, the history of the hierarchy. She has been not an occasional but a continuous persecutor. Still, if Mr. Courtney can select a few of the most striking or most instructive examples, it will, perhaps, not be amiss."

"An examination of these facts," said Mr. Courtney, "so far from causing a needless waste of time, or directing our attention from the main object which we have in hand, will be almost essential to our perfect understanding, not only of the position of this claimant, but of several of the others. And though we cannot enter into all the horrible details of the persecutions which God's people have sustained from this ecclesiastical hierarchy and her descendants, we cannot do less than briefly to trace her history in connection with this point."

"Please give it to us, then, as briefly as you can," said the Doctor.

"No, no, Mr. Courtney!" exclaimed Theodosia. "Please tell us all you know about it. Dr. Thinkwell has been over all this ground, and does not remember that to the rest of us it will be entirely new, and will have all the interest of romance."

"The history of persecution is a strange history, in any light in which we are able to view it; and the strangest chapter in that history is that which relates to the persecution of Christians by those who professed to be themselves the friends and followers of Jesus. It was not wonderful that Pagans should kill Christians, and seek to arrest the progress of a religion which so bitterly denounced their opinions and their practices, and was so utterly and irreconcilably opposed to all that they held sacred. Christianity, wherever it was received, abrogated and destroyed the power of the Pagan

priests. The reverence with which they had been greeted was changed to pity or contempt. The costly offerings no longer came to enrich their shrines; no victims bled before their altars. The pomp and grandeur of their imposing ceremonies was gone. Their temples were crumbling to ruin; and all the splendor and pageantry of their once attractive ritual no longer attracted countless thousands to gaze, and wonder, and adore. These priests were the educated, the intelligent, the governing minds of vast and powerful nations. They would not see their power sliding from out their grasp, and make no effort to retain it. Instinctively they clung to it with the tenacity of the death-struggle. The intensest efforts of the mightiest minds of all the Pagan world were exerted in defence of the ancient religion. Nor does it seem too much to believe that they were aided in their counsels by suggestions from that Prince of darkness whose willing servants they had been so long. As Rome was now the mistress of the world, it was in Rome that the great battle must be fought. When Paul began to preach there, in his own hired house, bound by a chain to the soldier who had his liberty in charge, Christianity was too small a thing to excite more than contemptuous disregard on the part of those in power. But when converts had multiplied, and some of them were found even in the household of the emperor, the priests became alarmed. They did not choose to reason, but determined to destroy. The government belonged to them, and all the ingenuity of statutes, all the powers of arms, and all the authority of the empire, were employed at once to crush the new religion to the earth, and grind out every vestige of it from the minds of men. If it had been like other religions, such would have been the speedy and certain result. But the name of Christ was stronger than the terrible name of Rome. Ten fearful persecutions, in which all the vast power and resources of the mightiest empire of the earth were

brought to bear with most malignant and terrific energy upon the rising sect, had passed, and yet it was not extinguished. The cruel Nero, the proud and perfidious Domitian, the superstitious Diocletian, in vain assailed it. The bodies of Christians were slaughtered in the streets; thrown alive into the arena of the amphitheatre, to be devoured by wild beasts; burned as torches to illuminate the public gardens; and subjected to tortures too horrible to mention. But Christianity still survived. Celsus, Porphyry, and Hierocles, attacked it by argument, by abuse, by satire, and denunciation; but it was still triumphant. 'The Apologies' of the Fathers were more than a match for the learning and wit of their opponents. Even Julian the Apostate, when he brought all the learning and all the skill of his philosophy, combined with all the power of the empire, to bear upon the religion which he had once embraced, and then disowned, was compelled to own in death that the Galilean had conquered—Christianity was triumphant. The temples of the idols became the churches of the worshippers of Jesus. The altars no longer smoked with the blood of sacrifices offered to Jove. And yet the *priests* were there, clothed, like their pagan predecessors, in their sacred robes, and much of what was called the worship of Jehovah was wonderfully like what had once been called the worship of Jupiter. The Christian name was there, but the purity and the power of the religion of Christ had been lost; and those who were now called Christians, so soon as they were invested with *the power*, showed that they were quite as ready to torture and torment, to persecute and destroy, those who ventured to call in question *their* authority, as the ancient *Pagans* had ever been."

"Please tell us, Mr. Courtney, how this change was brought about. How was it that the disciples of Him who was another name for love and who bade his followers to do good to them who hated them, and pray for those who persecuted

them—how was it that they ceased to obey their Lord, and became themselves the murderers of their brethren?"

"When the religion of Christ," replied Mr. Courtney, "became the *popular* religion; when those who professed it were courted and flattered rather than imprisoned and killed; when nobles and emperors had espoused the cause of Christ, bad men united with that party for the sake of power and influence. When infant baptism (or, rather, the baptism of minors, for the baptism of *babes* was not introduced till a later day;) had been adopted, and the only prerequisite for Church-membership was the ability to repeat, like a parrot, the words of a creed, and answer some questions of a catechism; when sincere repentance and a living faith in Christ had been dispensed with as terms of admission to the Churches, they soon came to be composed of unconverted men, who had no spiritual understanding of the gospel, and to whom religion was but an empty form, valuable only so far as it could be used for purposes of worldly aggrandizement. These Churches were no longer the assemblies of the disciples of Jesus. They had already ceased to be true Churches of Christ; they were mere companies of *worldly men*, who had no love for Jesus or his cause, and cared far less for the prosperity of *his* kingdom than for their own promotion. The first step towards that fearful change by which Christ's Church was driven out of sight, and an establishment having the same name, though consisting of a different sort of people, and organized under a very different constitution, and filled with rancorous hatred towards it, was the *loss of the independence of the local societies*. Christ, as we have seen, made each Church independent. It had none above it but himself alone. He was its Lord and Master; but it called no one master on the earth.

"But it happened very early (some time in the second century) that this wise arrangement began to be changed. In

the large *cities* the first Church that was organized began to take precedence of the others, which were formed, to some extent, under its superintendence. The process was very simple and very natural. There was a large and influential Church: it had in it a number of ministers, who were all called presbyters—that is, elders or bishops. Some one of these it chose to be its pastor. As the membership increased, it would become inconvenient for all to meet in the same place. They would consequently assemble for worship in different localities in the city; and it was but natural that they should request *him* whom they all recognized as their *pastor*, and to whose Church they came to partake of the holy supper, and at whose hands they had received their baptism, to send them some elder to conduct their public worship. It was but natural that he should request some minister to go, and that he should even desire him to take the permanent charge, with the consent of all concerned, of this little interest. It was but natural that what was thus done as a matter of convenience and courtesy, should soon come to be regarded (among people so ignorant of Christianity as the first converts from Paganism must have been) as a matter of *right*, and founded in the original constitution of the Church. The new assembly still considered itself as an appendage to the first, and its minister was still subject to the pastor of the first as his pastor. And in time he was regarded as holding his place, not by the will of the people to whom he ministered, but by that of the pastor who had designated him to the work. A number of such outside assemblies would be formed: in each the same results would follow, from the influence of like causes. The pastor of the first and prominent Church would find himself, though having no immediate concern in their affairs, yet nominally the pastor of thousands of people, to whom he never ministered, but who were under the control of those who soon began to be styled *his* presbyters, or inferior clergy;

while he, by way of eminence, was called the '*episcopos*;' that is, in plain English, 'the overseer;' a term which is employed several times in the New Testament, but always as synonymous with '*presbuteros*,' or elder; as when Paul is said to have sent for the '*presbyters*,' elders of the Church at Ephesus, and charged them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them 'bishops'—rendered in our version, very properly, 'overseers.' Now, all this may have been very innocently done. The first of the pastors who thus acquired the control of other Churches than his own, may have been, and probably was, desirous, *not* so much to extend his own power as to extend the conquests of religion. The influence which he exerted was probably much more dependent on his personal character than on his official position. The people *loved* him, and were unwilling to be *entirely* dissevered from his ministry. They offered him the spontaneous and unenforced subjection of willing hearts, and sought instruction and direction from him in their ecclesiastical affairs rather as a father in the Lord than as the *ruler* over their consciences. But a generation passed away. What was at first mere courtesy had now become custom. His successor could demand, as a right, the control which the other had, perhaps, reluctantly retained. The bishop claimed the *right* to designate the ministers to the secondary Churches; he claimed the right to control their discipline; he claimed as a right the *fees* and revenues which began to accrue from various sources. He found himself in a place of power and influence. His control over so many thousands of people made his friendship important to political aspirants. He could be useful to the state; the state therefore confirmed his claims, and, if need be, enforced them by the secular power. The bishop and his diocese became a part of the apparatus of the empire, and his relations to the Churches were established by the civil laws. Here was the

first error. The original simplicity of the Church organization established by Christ and the apostles was lost, and the independent local Church was swallowed up in a *hierarchy*, or ecclesiastical establishment, consisting of all the Churches in a certain city, or province, or country, made subject, more or less completely, to one common head. Congregational independence was displaced, and episcopacy was set up in its stead. This was not done everywhere at once; nor was it *ever* done by *all* the Churches. Some there were who still refused subjection to any lord but Christ; and were for this the objects of the bitterest persecution on the part of those who had acknowledged the supremacy of the bishops, and formed alliance with the state."

"Excuse me, gentlemen," exclaimed the Bishop, who had come in after this conversation commenced, and had taken a seat apart from the little circle engaged in it, apparently with the determination to have no more to say in the discussion—"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I would like to know upon *what authority* such statements as those to which I have just listened can possibly be based. The explanation of the pretended rise of Episcopacy is certainly very ingenious, and to me has been very entertaining, as will be, doubtless, the story of the innumerable evils of which it is, I discover, to be made the parent. And it seems almost a pity to spoil such a beautiful fabric by knocking the foundation out from under it; and that I fancy I can do by simply asking upon what it rests? For if *any* fact recorded in ecclesiastical history is certain, it is that the Church of Christ, from the earliest days, even from the time of the apostles themselves, was organized upon the Episcopal plan, and recognized three orders of the ministry: to the first of which (that is, the bishops) was given the exclusive authority to ordain to the ministry, and exercise the discipline of the Churches."

"It is very easy," replied Mr. Courtney. "to make confi-

lent assertions, and sometimes very difficult to sustain them by the only admissible testimony. You ask me upon what foundation I base my explanation of the rise of the Episcopacy, and by what authority I have made such statements concerning it. I will answer you frankly and freely.

“In the *first* place, we have, by a careful study of this book, [laying his hand upon the Bible,] ascertained that the Churches established by the apostles were independent, local Churches. There is no such thing as a hierarchy there. There is no Church mentioned there which subjected any other Church to itself, or became itself subject to any other. If, therefore, Churches became thus dependent and confederated in the apostles’ days, it must have been after the canon of the Scripture was closed.

“In the next place, it is, I believe, the *unanimous testimony* of those who have written impartially the history of the first Churches, that they continued to be thus independent *at least* until the second century.

“What says the learned Mosheim? ‘A bishop, during the first and second centuries, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at that time was generally small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly he acted, not so much with the authority of a *master* as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful *servant*. He instructed the people, performed the several parts of Divine worship, attended the sick, and inspected into the circumstances and supplies of the poor.’ (See vol. i., *Ecclesiastical History*, pp 100–106.)

“But when he comes to speak of the third century, he says, ‘The face of things now began to change in the Christian Church. The ancient method of ecclesiastical government *seemed* still to subsist in general, while at the same time, by imperceptible steps, it varied from the primitive rule, and degenerated toward the form of a religious mon

archy. For the bishops aspired to higher degrees of power than they had formerly possessed; and not only violated the rights of the *people*, but also made gradual encroachments on the privileges of the *presbyters*. And that they might cover these usurpations with an air of justice and an appearance of reason, *they published* NEW DOCTRINES concerning the *nature of the Church*, and the *Episcopal dignity*. One of the principal authors of this change was *Cyprian*, (Bishop of Carthage,) who pleaded for the power of the bishops with more zeal and vehemence than had ever been hitherto employed in that cause. This change in the form of ecclesiastical government was soon followed by a train of vices which dishonored the character and authority of those to whom the administration of the Church was committed. For although several yet continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and Christian virtue, yet many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy professors and ministers.' (Pages 265-267.)

"Concerning the *fourth* century, the same learned historian speaks as follows: 'The bishops, whose opulence and authority were considerably increased since the reign of Constantine, began gradually to introduce innovations into the form of ecclesiastical discipline, and to change the ancient government of the Church. The *first* step was the entire exclusion of the people from all part in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs; and afterwards, they by degrees divested even the presbyters of their ancient privileges, and their primitive rights, that they might have no importunate protestors to control their ambition or oppose their proceedings, and, principally, that they might either engross to themselves, or distribute as they

thought proper, the possessions and revenues of the Church. Hence it came to pass that at the conclusion of the fourth century there remained no more than a mere shadow of the ancient government of the Church. Many of the privileges which had formerly belonged to the presbyters and people were usurped by the bishops; and many of the rights which had been formerly vested in the universal Church were transferred to the emperors and to subordinate officers and magistrates.' (Page 348.)

"Similar to this is the testimony of Neander. He says——"

"But what does it matter in this dispute," exclaimed the Bishop, "what such writers as Mosheim, or Neander, or Coleman, may assert? They are opposed to the Episcopacy. They wrote, in part at least, for the express purpose of bringing it into discredit. They, and such as they, are not disinterested, and, consequently, are not reliable witnesses."

"I should be very sorry to believe," replied the school master, "that such men could not relate the real facts of the history they profess to record, even though they *did* believe that the existence and authority of diocesan bishops was an unauthorized innovation upon the original order of the Churches. But I am disposed to be very accommodating in regard to the ecclesiastical character of my witnesses. I have such a variety that I am sure I can satisfy the most fastidious taste. Suppose we pass by Neander and Coleman. You surely will not object to Gibbon—the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Mr. Gibbon says of the first and second centuries: 'The public functions of religion were solely intrusted to the established ministers of the Church—the *bishops* and the *presbyters*; two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same *office*, and the same *order of persons*. The name of *presbyter* was expressive of their age, or rather of their *gravity* or *wisdom*. The title of *bishop* denoted their *inspec-*

tion over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care. In proportion to the respective numbers of the faithful, a larger or smaller number of these *Episcopal presbyters* guided each infant congregation with equal authority and with united counsels.'

"In this we have a picture of one of the earliest Churches. It was an organized body of baptized believers, who had among them a number of members who, on account of their wisdom and gravity, were called presbyters, or elders; and to whom had been committed the general oversight of the membership; and they were on this account called *bishops*, or overseers. But Gibbon goes on to say that 'The most perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a superior magistrate; and the order of public deliberations soon introduces the office of a *president*, [or chairman,] invested at least with the authority of collecting the sentiments and of executing the resolutions of the assembly. A regard for the public tranquillity, which would so frequently have been interrupted by annual or by occasional elections, induced the primitive Christians to constitute an honorable and perpetual magistracy, and to choose one of the wisest and most holy among their presbyters to execute, during his life, the duties of their ecclesiastical governor; [that is, to make him perpetual president of their congregation; or, in other words, invest him with the pastorate.] It was under these circumstances,' continues the historian, 'that the lofty title of *bishop* began to raise itself above the humble appellation of *presbyter*. And while the latter remained the most natural distinction for the members of every Christian senate, the former was appropriated to its new *president*. The pious and humble presbyters, who were first dignified with the Episcopal title, could not possess, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircle the tiara of the Roman pontiff, or the mitre of a German prelate. *The primitive*

bishops were considered only as the FIRST of their EQUALS, and the honorable servants of a free people. Whenever the Episcopal chair became vacant by death, a new president was chosen among the presbyters, by the suffrage OF THE WHOLE CONGREGATION. Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles. (*Decline and Fall*, vol. ii., pp. 272, 275.)

“Here is, according to Gibbon, whom you will admit to be an impartial witness, a direct assertion of the fact that the elders and bishops were at first the same, and, for more than a hundred years after the apostles had died, there was no other distinction between them, except that the title of bishop began to be appropriated exclusively to *that* presbyter whom some Church had chosen, by the vote of the whole congregation, to *preside* in their meetings and execute their decisions. But now, when he comes to speak of the *third* century, he presents a different picture :

“As the legislative authority of the particular Churches was insensibly superseded by the use of *councils*, the bishops obtained by their alliance a much larger share of executive and arbitrary power. And, as soon as they were connected by a sense of their common interest, they were enabled to attack, with united vigor, the original rights of the clergy and people. The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of *exhortation* to that of *command*, scattered the seeds of future usurpations, and supplied, by Scripture allegories and declamatory rhetoric, their deficiency of force and reason. They exalted the unity and power of the Church, as it was represented in the Episcopal office, of which every bishop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion. Princes and magistrates, it was often repeated, might boast an earthly claim to a transitory dominion. It was the Episcopal authority alone that was derived from the Deity, and extended itself

over this and another world. Bishops were the vicegerents of Christ, the successors of the apostles, and the mystic substitutes of the high-priest of the Mosaic law. Their exclusive privilege of conferring the sacerdotal character invaded the freedom both of the clerical and popular elections. And if, in the administration of the Church, they sometimes consulted the judgment of the presbyters, or the inclination of the people, they most carefully inculcated the merit of such a voluntary condescension.' (Vol. i, pp. 276, 277.)

"Surely Mr. Gibbon sustains substantially what I asserted. The Church is at first a local society, governed by several presbyters. One of these is presently selected by the whole congregation to preside over their deliberations, and execute their will. To him, in time, the title of bishop, which had at first been given to all the presbyters, becomes specially appropriated. But yet, though a bishop, he is bishop only of the one local society, and is among them rather a servant than a ruler. This continues till the third century. Then the bishops begin to combine to elevate the Episcopal office. Then they begin to change the language of exhortation to that of command. Then, so far from regarding themselves as the *servants* of Christ's people, they claim to be successors of the apostles and vicegerents of Christ himself."

"But," replied the Bishop, "you must be well aware that Gibbon was an infidel, and an enemy to the Christian religion; and, consequently, not the most reliable authority in matters of ecclesiastical polity."

"Certainly, sir; and I would not have thought of referring to him if he had not been; and that in regard to this very point most fully endorsed by Dr. Haweis, one of your own most eminent divines, and the historian of your own Church. Dr. Haweis says, 'Where no immediate bias to distort the truth leaves him an impartial witness, I will quote Gibbon with pleasure. I am conscious that his authority is more

likely to weigh with the world in general than mine; *I will therefore simply repeat his account of the primitive Church; I think we shall not on this point greatly differ.*' (*Ecc. Hist.*, vol i., p. 414.)

"But, if you object to Gibbon, even thus endorsed and vouched for, I am disposed to be accommodating. I will give you testimony from the Episcopal Church of England. Nay, I will go back and call the ancient Fathers from their graves, and they shall testify.

"What say you to the statements of your own Episcopal Bowdler? 'I am aware,' he says in his letters, 'that in St. Jerome's time there existed generally, though by no means universally, this difference between the bishop and the presbyters, namely, that to the former was then confided the power of ordination. The transition from perfect equality to absolute superiority was not suddenly effected. It was the growth of time—not of years, but of centuries; the distinction of authority, or *office*, preceding that of order, or degree in the Church, and being introductory to it. With the former (the distinction in *office*) I have no concern; it being sufficient to show that, as a distinct and superior *order* in the Church, Episcopacy, in the modern acceptation of the term, *did not exist* in the time of the apostles; and that, however expedient and desirable such an institution might be, it cannot plead the sanction of apostolic appointment or example. It may be difficult to fix the period exactly when the Episcopate was first recognized as a distinct *order* in the Church, and when the consecration of bishops, *as such*, came into general use. Clearly not, I think, when St. Jerome wrote. Thus much, at least, is *certain*, namely, that the government of each Church, including the ordination of ministers, was at first in the hands of the presbytery, [the company of elders embraced in its numbers;] that when one of that body was raised to the office of president, and on whom the title of bishop

was conferred, it was simply by the election (*co-optatio*) of the other presbyters, whose appointment was final, requiring no confirmation or consecration at the hands of any other prelates; and that each Church was essentially independent of every other.'

"But Bowdler, I know, though an Episcopalian, was a layman; and perhaps, as you are disposed to be so very particular about the ecclesiastical relations of your witnesses, you may prefer the testimony of a bishop; nay, of an archbishop, and he one of the most eminent for his learning and logic. What says Archbishop Whateley upon this subject? Does he deny that the first Churches were independent, and the first bishops were bishops or pastors of only a single local society? 'Though there was,' he says, 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, for all of these, yet *they were each a distinct, independent community* on earth; united by the common principles on which they were founded, by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but *not* having any one recognized head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of those societies over others. Each bishop originally presided over one entire Church.' (*Kingdom of Christ.*)

"And, if it will not seem wrong to come down from the high place of the archbishop to the stand of a simple minister, what will you say to the testimony of that learned and eminent Episcopal divine, John Edwards, D.D., who, after a careful exposition of the teachings of the Fathers upon this subject, thus concludes: 'From all these we may gather that the Scripture bishop was the chief of the *presbyters*, but he was not of a distinct *order* from them; and as for the times after the apostles, none of these writers, [Clement, Ignatius, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, etc.,] nor any ecclesiastical historian, tells us that an order superior to presbyters was set over the presbyters. It is true, one single person is recorded to have presided over the college of pres-

byters ; but this college had the same power with the single person, though not the particular dignity of the presidentship. The short is, the *bishops* in these times were presbyters ; only he that presided over the body of presbyters was called bishop, while the rest were generally known by the title of presbyters ; and the bishop was still but a presbyter, *as to order* and function ; though, for distinction's sake, he was known by the name of *bishop*. He was superior to the other presbyters so long as he executed his office ; just as a chairman in a committee is above the rest of the justices, whilst he holds that place. It was generally the most ancient presbyter that was chosen to preside over the college of presbyters ; but he had no superiority of authority. All the priority or primacy he had was that of order. Here is the ancient pattern. Why was it not followed ? To single Fathers we may add councils, who deliver the same sense. This, then, is the true account of the matter. Bishops were elders, or presbyters ; and, therefore, of the same order. But the bishops differed from the presbyters in this *only* : that they were chosen by the elders to preside over them at their ecclesiastical meetings or assemblies. But, in after ages, the presbyters of some Churches parted with their liberty and right, and agreed among themselves that ecclesiastical matters should be managed by the bishop only.' (*Edwards's Remains*, p. 253.)

"So also the famous Bishop Burnet says expressly, 'I acknowledge bishop and presbyter to be *one* ; and so plead for no new office-bearer in the Church. The first branch of their power is their authority to publish the gospel, to manage the worship, and dispense the sacraments ; and *this is all that is of Divine right* in the ministry, in which the *bishops and presbyters* are *equal* sharers. But, besides this, the Church claimeth a power of jurisdiction, of making rules for discipline, and applying and executing the same ; all of which is, indeed,

suitable to the common laws of society, and the general rules of Scripture, but hath no positive warrant from any Scripture precept. And all these constitutions of Churches into synods; and the canons of discipline taking their rise from the division of the world into several provinces, beginning in the second or beginning of the third century, do clearly show that they can be derived from no Divine original and so were, as to their form, but mere human institutions.'

"But I will not fatigue you. This is enough from the English Church; though but a specimen of what remains on record. It is possible you may not be quite pleased with even these witnesses, though they be your own brethren. They get their information from the Fathers. We can go to the same source. To them you can surely have no objection."

"Excuse me for interrupting you," said Theodosia; "but I am a little bewildered. I do not understand precisely what a discussion on Episcopacy has to do with the Church of Rome. I have been accustomed to associate the word *Episcopacy* with the Church of England and the Methodists; but not with the Roman Catholics."

"Perhaps," replied Mr. Courtney, "I should have explained before, that our word Episcopal is formed from the Greek word '*Episcopos*,' which signifies an overseer. It is sometimes so rendered in the New Testament, and sometimes it is rendered bishop; which is, in fact, only the English form of the same word. It is said by some, who profess to have traced the several steps by which *Episcopos* became bishop, that it first lost the prefix '*E*,' and was pronounced '*Piscopos*;' then the affix '*us*,' and was called '*Piscopus*;' then, by a common transition, '*P*' became '*B*,' and it was '*Biscopus*.' Then the '*c*' was changed to '*h*,' and it became our common word, bishop. So you see that Episcopal is the same as Bishopical, if there were only such a word. The Episcopal Church is the Bishopical Church; that is, the Church that is

governed by bishops. So the Methodist Episcopal Church is that portion of the Methodist denomination which is subject to bishops, as distinguished from the Protestant or Independent Methodists, who refuse to acknowledge their authority. Now it is the peculiar characteristic of the Episcopal and Methodist Churches, that they are controlled by bishops; but they have both inherited this peculiarity in consequence of their regular descent from Rome. It is a part of the system of Popery, which they have retained.

"You inquired, some time since, by what process those which had been the Churches of Jesus became the persecutors of his people? I replied, that the first step seems to have been taken by giving up their *independence* as separate, local organizations, and becoming united in a hierarchy, in which they were subject to bishops; or, in other words, it was the setting up of the Episcopacy.

"Our friend here took issue with me upon this point, and assured us that it was as certain as any historical fact could be, that no such change from independence to Episcopacy had ever been made, since the Episcopacy existed from the very first, and was the order which was established by Christ and the apostles.

"I have been trying to convince him that I did not speak without authority when I said the change was made; and described briefly the manner in which it was brought about. If any reliance is to be placed on the testimony of men who, like the Magdeburg Centuriators, Mosheim, Neander, and other ecclesiastical historians, have made Christian antiquities the object of their most laborious and careful investigation, my statements are fully sustained. But, as some of these may have been suspected of some latent aversion to Episcopacy, I have quoted Episcopalians, stating the same things. And now I propose to bring up the testimony of the Fathers, as they are called; that is, those Christian writers

whose works have escaped the tooth of all-devouring time and have come down to us from the very days when this change was made. These, after all, must decide the question; for modern historians and divines can only tell us what, in their opinion, the Fathers did actually say upon the subject."

"But, Mr. Courtney, why can we not decide this question by the *Scriptures*? If we cannot find Episcopacy in the *Scriptures*, it must, as a matter of course, have been introduced after they were written; or, *if introduced before*, must be without any binding authority on us. I don't like to be dependent on mere *human* testimony, when we have the infallible Word for our guide."

"We have already ascertained, madam, that the *Scripture* Churches were *independent* Churches: that each one had in itself all that was needful to make it a complete Church; and that, so far from being subject to the rule of a bishop from without, it was itself the administrator of Christ's laws; and, as such, had the making, and, if need be, the unmaking, of bishops in its hands. The bishops were its servants, not its masters."

"Then you admit that the *Scripture* Churches *had* bishops?"

"Surely they had. So far as practicable, every Church had its bishop, and some of them had several bishops. Every minister who had the charge—the oversight—of a Church, either exclusively to himself, or in conjunction with other ministers, was, according to the *Scriptures*, designated a bishop. There were plenty of bishops; there were as many bishops as there were pastors; and, in a certain sense, the Churches were *subject* to their bishops. But no Church was subject to any bishop but *her own*, chosen by herself to conduct her worship and *preside* in her business meetings."

"I see now how it was," said Theodosia; "and begin to understand the reason why my mind has all the time been

confused. The word bishop, in the New Testament, means one thing, and in modern English another, and a very different thing. Then, a bishop was the simple pastor of a Church. Now, he is the ruler of a diocese, including all the Churches in a certain province, state, or district of country."

"Precisely so," said Mr. Courtney. "But the change is *not* merely in the number of Churches subjected to his supervision; but in the nature of the relation which he sustains to them. Then the bishop was chosen from their own members by the Church to be her pastor. Now the bishop is created by some power outside the Church; and *he* chooses a pastor for the Church, and sends him to her, whether she desire it or not. Then the Church received herself those whom she thought worthy of membership. Now, the members can only be received by the bishop, or his deputy, the priest or minister in charge. Then the Church exercised the needful discipline upon her own members, reproving, suspending, excluding, or restoring, as the executive and judiciary of Christ; but now all this is done without her voice, by the bishop or his representatives. The Church, which was the independent executive of Christ the King, has become the abject dependent of a man-made master. Now, we were inquiring *how this change was brought about?* I have given you the testimony of Mosheim and of Gibbon. I might have given you that of Neander, Schaff, Coleman, and Buusen; and, in fact, of almost every author of ecclesiastical history who has gone back to this early day, and given a picture of the first Churches in this particular. They all agree that the Church, at first, was a local, independent society, or organization, and that the bishop was but the pastor of one of these Churches. In regard to the distinction between the presbyters and bishops, some regard these as but two different words for the same thing. Some think that when there were more elders than one, which seems generally to have been the case, one

of them was chosen to preside in their meetings, and he was called bishop. But he was still only the president, or bishop, of that local Church. All agree that, at an early day, when mission Churches, so to speak, began to grow up around some principal Church, the bishop of that Church began to be considered the bishop of the subordinate Churches, and these Churches subject to the control of that first established; and thus the foundation was laid for that system of despotism which has since so utterly destroyed the original freedom of all those Churches which have become subject to the bishops, whether in the Grecian, the Roman, the English, or the Methodist communions.

"I have said that the general correctness of this view was conceded by many eminent Episcopalians themselves, the testimony of some of whom I have repeated. And now, I will show you from the Fathers themselves that such a change as I have asserted was actually made. It has been customary for the advocates of the Divine origin of Episcopacy to appeal with great confidence to the testimony of the Fathers. One of them writes as follows: 'Is it not reasonable to suppose that the primitive Fathers of the Church must have been well acquainted with the mode of ecclesiastical government established by Christ and his apostles? Now, *their* testimony is *universally* in our favor. What course, then, have the enemies of Episcopacy for the most part pursued? Why, they have endeavored, by every art of misrepresentation, to invalidate this testimony of the Fathers.' If others have done so, I will not. Let the testimony of the Fathers stand for all it is worth. I welcome them as the best of witnesses as to what existed and as to what transpired in their days. But I will not believe that the Church of Christ is to be any thing different from that which we can find in the Scriptures, even on the testimony of the Fathers, and martyrs besides. The Bible for me, before all the Fathers that ever wrote, and all the martyrs

that ever bled. So, after I have found the scriptural Church to be a local and independent body, I will not change it into a hierarchy, though every Father and every martyr in the catalogue should unite in testifying that in their day it was a hierarchy. If *Christ* set up the hierarchy, and makes it binding on his people, we should have the record of it in his Word. If *men* set it up, without his authority, I do not care how *early* they did it, nor how many or clear the testimonies that it was set up. My Church must be the Church of Christ, and not of the Fathers. If the Fathers testify that Christ laid down the plan of the hierarchy in the Scriptures, I would simply say, I can and must examine the Scriptures for myself. If I *cannot find it* there, I cannot believe *it is* there. If the Fathers merely assert that it *existed in their day*, I am ready to admit it, and let the advocates of the bishops make the most they can out of it. What if it *did* exist? Its existence is nothing, unless it can be shown that it existed by the authority of the Master."

"Its existence," replied the Bishop, who had listened with great apparent indifference to this long speech of the school-master—"its existence in the days of the Fathers proves that it *began* before their days. And since some of them had seen and conversed with the apostles, it follows that it must have begun in the times of the apostles. And if it began in their day, and we find no expression of their disapprobation, it must be conceded that it had their sanction and authority."

"I am willing to grant all that," said Mr. Courtney; "and if you will show me that the hierarchy had been established, and that *prelatical* bishops, *diocesan* bishops, or any other bishops than those spoken of in the New Testament, who were, as we have seen, the bishops of a single congregation or one local Church, were in existence during the lifetime of any of the Fathers who had spoken with the apostles, I will yield the point, and admit that the apostles taught one thing

in their writings, and sanctioned its opposite in their practice. Nay, I will go farther—I will yield it if you will show me such a prelatical bishop any time before the beginning of the third century, or before the *change* of which I have been talking so much had taken place. I know very well that Clement of Rome, who lived towards the last of the first century, and who, it is supposed, had conversed with Peter and Paul, wrote an epistle to the Church at Corinth, in which he mentions bishops, and deacons, and presbyters. So the New Testament, in a variety of places, speaks of bishops, deacons, and presbyters. The question is, Who were *these* bishops? Paul sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders, that is, the presbyters of *that* Church, and said to them at parting, ‘Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*.’ Did not Paul mean the *same persons*, by bishops, whom Luke calls presbyters or elders? They were but two different titles for the same officers. If they were prelatical bishops, then there were several prelatical bishops in the one city.

“So Paul, writing to Titus, says, that he left him in Crete, among other things, that he might ordain them elders—‘*Presbuterous*’—in every city; and then goes on to give him instruction concerning the qualifications for the office, and tells him a bishop—*Episcopos*—must be blameless as the steward of God.

“When he writes to Timothy on the same subject, he mentions only deacons and *bishops*; but says not a word about the presbyters. Yet he was instructing him in regard to the officers of a Church. Presbyters, therefore, must be included in the term bishop; for it is evident he did not mean to overlook them, since he mentions them expressly afterwards in the same epistle.

“But if this leave any doubt, it must be removed by what he says to the Philippians: ‘To the saints which are at

Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.' 'How is this?' says Chrysostom, one of the Fathers. 'Were there many bishops in the same city? By no means; but he calls the *presbyters* by this name, (*bishops*,) for at that time this was the common appellation of both.'

"So Peter exhorts the presbyters to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof—literally, *bishoping* it—(*Episcopountes*.) The presbyters are called bishops; they are to have the same qualifications, and are to perform the same duties. It is as clear as it can be made that the two terms are employed indiscriminately, and are entirely synonymous. Now, as the Scriptures thus employ the word bishop, so do the earliest Fathers. The bishops Clement speaks of are therefore simple presbyters.

"Hermas, also of Rome, is the next of the Fathers commonly quoted on this subject. He too speaks of those who preside over the Church: 'Thou shalt say to those who preside over the Church that they order their ways in righteousness, that they may fully receive the promise in much glory.'

"Now, who are these who preside over the Church? They are the presbyters; for he says, farther on, 'After this I saw a vision at home, in my own house; and the old woman whom I had seen before came to me, and asked me if I had yet delivered her book to the *elders*, (*presbyters*;) and I answered that I had not yet. She replied, Thou hast done well, for I have certain more words to tell thee; and when I have finished all the words, they shall be clearly understood by the elect. And thou shalt write two books, and send one to Clement, and one to Grapte. For Clement shall send it to the foreign cities, because it is permitted him to do so. But Grapte shall admonish the widows and orphans. But thou shalt read in this city with *the elders who preside over the Church*.' Whether these presiding officers were benefited by the admonitions of the old woman's book or not, it is certain they

were *elders*. And in another place, he expressly calls them bishops. 'For what concerns the tenth mountain, on which were the trees covering the cattle, they are such as have believed, and some of them have been BISHOPS; *that is, PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCHES.*'

"The next in order of the earliest Fathers is Polycarp. He never employs the word bishop; but often speaks of the elders, or presbyters, and deacons. He uses such language concerning the presbyters as to show that they were the presidents of the Church. 'Let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful towards all, turning them from their errors, seeking out those who are weak, not forgetting the widows, the fatherless, and the poor; abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgment; not easy to believe any thing against any; *nor severe in judgment*, knowing that we are all debtors in point of law.'

"Paphias, who was a companion of Polycarp, and a disciple of John, in a fragment of his writings preserved by Eusebius, calls the apostles *presbyters*, as they sometimes called themselves; but makes no mention of bishops. 'I shall not think it grievous,' he says, 'to set down in writing the things which I have learned of the *presbyters*: what *Andrew*, what *Peter*, what *Philip*, what *Thomas*, or *James* had said; what *John*, or *Matthew*, or any other disciples of the Lord were wont to say; and what *Ariston* or *John* the presbyter said. For I am of the mind that I could not profit so much by reading books, as by attending to those who spake with the living voice.'

"Irenæus, who suffered martyrdom early in the third century, and wrote towards the close of the second, speaks as Clement and Hermas had done, of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. We do not deny this, but we ask, What did he mean by bishops? What sort of bishops were they? Were they scriptural bishops, or prelatical bishops? Were these

bishops *not* pastors of single Churches, but lords over all the Churches in a certain diocese or district? It is enough to say that he, like Paul, employs the words *presbyter* and *bishop* indiscriminately, to signify the very same persons and officers. In one place he says, 'We can enumerate those who were constituted *bishops* by the apostles in the Churches, and their successors even to us.'

"In another, 'Obey those *presbyters* in the Church who have the *succession*, as we have shown, from the apostles; who with the succession of the episcopate [*or bishopric*] received the gift of truth.'

"He mentions by name those who had governed the Church of Rome from the first down to his own time; and says, they had the *episcopate*. And, in another place, he mentions them again by name, and calls them *presbyters*.

"Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, in the famous apology which he wrote to the emperor, speaks several times of *the president*: 'The president having given thanks;' 'the president delivers a discourse,' etc. Now, as he was giving an account of each Christian congregation, it is evident that each one had its own president; and if the president was the bishop, it follows that every Church had its own bishop; or, in other words, the bishop was simply the pastor. Clement of Alexandria speaks of deacons, *presbyters*, and *bishops*; but he also uses the word *bishop* in the same sense. He says that on a certain occasion the Apostle John gave a certain young man into the charge of a particular *bishop*, and that the *presbyter* [meaning the same man] took him home to his own house, nourished, comforted, cherished, and at length baptized him."

"I have purposely abstained from interrupting your disquisition," said the Bishop, "because I do not wish or intend to enter into an argument under existing circumstances; but I will take the liberty merely to remind you that you have

omitted all mention of that Father on whom the advocates of the Episcopacy most confidently rely."

"I know I have," said Mr. Courtney. "I left him till the last, because he will require some peculiar treatment. The epistles of Ignatius have ever been the stronghold of Episcopacy; and some have concluded that it was on *this account* that their genuineness has been so often called in question. But this cannot be given as the reason why Dr. Hammond, himself a zealous son of the Church, speaking of some of the evident interpolations of these epistles, should have said that they were 'senseless,' 'extravagant,' and evidently the work of some 'impostor.' This could not be the reason why an earnest advocate of the prelacy should say of them, 'that these compositions will surely not be alleged by any *capable* and *candid* advocate for primitive Episcopacy, without great hesitation—by many they will be entirely rejected.'"

"I have heard much," said the Doctor, "of these epistles; and yet I have rather an indistinct conception of what they are, and what depends upon them."

"The epistles of Ignatius," said the schoolmaster, "when they first appeared, were eleven in number; and soon after, another was added; and, after a time, three more, making the whole number fifteen. Archbishop Wake translated them, and attempted to ascertain which of them were genuine. He says, 'To pass by the first and most imperfect [edition] of them, the best that for a long time was extant contained not only a great number of epistles falsely ascribed to this author, but even those that were genuine so altered and corrupted that it is hard to find the true Ignatius in them.'

"The first that began to remedy this confusion, and to restore this great writer to his primitive simplicity, was our most reverend and learned Archbishop Usher, in his edition of ~~them~~

at Oxford, 1644.' Usher conceived that six of them were genuine Wake accepted seven, though he does not deny that the seventh is very suspicious. These six or seven are all that Protestants now ever quote in this controversy. On those the cause of Episcopacy is made to rest, so far as the authority of Ignatius can give it any support.

"But it has happened recently that new materials for criticism have been brought to light; and by their aid, the accomplished Chevalier Bunsen has been able to determine, beyond all reasonable doubt, that four of these seven were forgeries, and the other three had been greatly interpolated. And that, when the writings of Ignatius alone remain, they give no sort of support to any other Episcopacy than that which finds a bishop in the pastor of every Church. Indeed, there are some who were willing to grant the genuineness of all the seven, and yet would undertake to show that, however often they might speak of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, they meant no more in any place by bishops than the *president* of a single Church, which meaning it is certain that the word acquired at a very early day. Thus the eminent Doctor, afterwards Bishop, Stillingfleet, himself a dignitary of the Church, expressly says: 'Of all the thirty-five testimonies produced out of Ignatius, in his epistle for the Episcopacy, I can meet with but *one* which is brought to prove the least semblance of an institution of Christ for Episcopacy; and, if I be not much deceived, the sense of *that* place is clearly mistaken.' (*Ironicum.*)

"In fact, all that is said of bishops in these epistles is entirely consistent with the idea that he was the simple pastor of a local Church, in which there were other elders, or *presbyters*, who were in some sort associated with him in the management of the Church, yet recognized him as their president or moderator, in all their assemblies.

"These if not all the Fathers of the first and second

centuries whose testimony is relied upon, are certainly those most relied upon. If they used the word bishop in the *scriptural* sense—the sense in which they had received it—then they must mean by a bishop no more than a pastor, a presbyter, having the charge of a congregation. If they use it in the sense which it acquired soon after the apostles, then they mean by it that presbyter who was chosen by the others and his Church to preside in their meetings. In one or the other of these senses they always used it. In no case did they mean by it a *prelatical* bishop; that is, a bishop having the exclusive power of ordination and of discipline—not in one Church alone, but over all within a certain *diocese*. They had no idea of *such* a bishop: such a one had not yet existed. There was as yet no Church which was subject to the rule of any other bishop than the one whom she had chosen. Theodoret, Cyprian, Augustine, and others, who lived in later times, represented the power of the bishop as already established. The Church had lost her independence. Jerome explains how it was done. He lived in the latter part of the fourth century, and after the hierarchy had been set up and established, but before men had forgotten that it had come in the place of something else. He was the most learned of all the Fathers, and one of the most eloquent of men. Nothing can be more plain and explicit than his testimony on this subject. Hear what he says in his commentary on the epistle to Titus: ‘Let us attend carefully to the words of the apostle, saying, *that thou mayest ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee*; who, discoursing in what follows what sort of *presbyter* is to be ordained, saith, “If any one be blameless, the husband of one wife,” etc., afterwards adds, “For a *bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God.” A presbyter, therefore, is the same as a bishop. And before there were, by the devil’s instinct, parties in religion, and it was said among the people, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of

Cephas, the Churches were governed by the common council of presbyters. But afterwards, when every one thought that those whom he had baptized were rather his than Christ's, it was determined by the whole world that *one* of the presbyters should be set above the rest, to whom all care of the Church should belong, that the seeds of schism might be taken away. If any suppose that this is our opinion, and not that of the Scriptures, that bishops and presbyters are the same, and that one is the name of age, and the other of office, let him read the words of the apostle to the Philippians, saying, "*Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the BISHOPS AND DEACONS.*" *Philippi* is a city of *Macedonia*; and certainly in one city there could not be more than *one* bishop, as they are now styled. But at that time they called the same men *bishops* whom they called *presbyters*. Therefore he speaks indifferently of bishops as of presbyters. This may seem, even yet, doubtful to some, till it be proved by another testimony. It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, that when the apostle came to Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the presbyters of that Church, to whom, among other things, he said, "Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Here observe diligently, that calling together the presbyters of one city, Ephesus, he afterwards styles the same persons bishops. If any will receive that epistle which is written in the name of Paul to the Hebrews, there also the care of the Church is equally divided among many; since he writes to the people, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as those that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you" And Peter, (so called from the firmness of his faith,) in his epistle, saith, "The presbyters which are among

you I exhort, who am also a presbyter and a witness of the sufferings of Christ; and also a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you; not by constraint, but willingly." These things have I written to show that among the ancients presbyters and bishops were the very same. But by little and little, that the seeds of dissension might be plucked up, the whole care was devolved on one. As, therefore, the presbyters know that by *the custom of the Church* [not by the authority of Christ] they are subject to him who is their *president*, so let the *bishops* know that *they* are above presbyters, more by the custom of the Church than by the true dispensation of Christ; and that they ought to rule the Church in common, imitating Moses, who, when he might alone rule the people of Israel, chose seventy, with whom he might judge the people.'

"Such is the testimony of this most learned Father, after the change was made. He says the bishops of his day *knew* that they were above the presbyters, not by the command of Christ, not by the original constitution of the Church, but that, little by little, the change had been brought in by *the custom of the Church*. To the same purpose, and, if possible, still more explicit, is *his letter to EVAGRIUS*: 'I hear that a certain person has broken out into such folly, that he prefers deacons before *presbyters*—that is, before *bishops*. For when the apostle clearly teaches that presbyters and bishops were the same, who can endure it that a minister of tables and widows should proudly exalt himself above those at whose prayers the body and blood of Christ is made? Do you seek for authority? Hear that testimony: "*Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*" Would you have another example? In the Acts of the Apostles Paul speaks thus to the priests of one Church: "*Take heed*

to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops: that you govern the Church, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And, lest any should contend about there being a plurality of bishops in one Church, hear also another testimony, by which it may most manifestly be proved that a bishop and presbyter are the same: "*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain presbyters in every city, as I have appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife,*" etc. "For a BISHOP must be blameless, as the steward of God." And to Timothy: "*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, by the laying on of the hands of the PRESBYTERY.*" And Peter also, in his first epistle, saith, "*The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a PRESBYTER, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, to rule the flock of Christ, and to inspect it, not of constraint, but willingly, according to God.*" Which is more significantly expressed in the Greek *Episcopountes*—that is, superintending it, whence the name of bishop is drawn.

"Do the testimonies of such men seem small to thee? Let the evangelical trumpet sound the son of thunder, whom Jesus loved much, who drank the streams of doctrine from our Saviour's breast: "*The presbyter to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.*" And in another epistle: "*The presbyter to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*" But that one was afterwards chosen who should be set above the rest, was done as a remedy against schism, lest every one, drawing the Church of Christ to himself, should break it in pieces. For at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist to Heraclas and Dionysius, the bishops thereof, the presbyters always named one chosen from among themselves and placed in a higher degree bishop; as if an army should

make an emperor, or the deacons should choose one of themselves whom they knew to be most diligent, and call him archdeacon.'

"This," continued the schoolmaster, "was what one who has since been called a *saint*, and who deserved the title better than most of those so named, said about the origin of the bishop government in the Church more than fourteen hundred years ago."

"Perhaps," suggested Theodosia, "he was peculiar in his opinions, and differed from all others of his time."

"So far from it, madam, we find the very same information in the writings of most of his contemporaries, whose works have survived the destruction of the dark ages which followed; not indeed so formally, but quite as unmistakably, announced.

"Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, writing to this same Jerome, who was only a presbyter, uses the following language: 'I entreat you to correct me faithfully, when you see I need it; for although, according to the *names of honor which the custom of the Church has now brought into use*, the office of bishop is greater than that of presbyter; nevertheless, Augustine is, in many respects, inferior to Jerome.'

"Bishop Jewel, in his defence of his apology for the Church of England, refers to this passage, to show that bishops and presbyters were originally the same; and thus translates it: 'The office of bishop is above the office of priest, not by authority of the Scriptures, but after the names of honor which the custom of the Church hath now obtained.' St. Ambrose, sometimes called St. Hilary, who lived and wrote at the same time, says, 'After that Churches were planted in all places, and officers ordained, *matters were settled otherwise than they were in the beginning*. And hence it is that the apostle's writings do not in all things agree to the *present* constitution of the Church, [A. D. 376,] because they were written under the first rise of the Church; for he

calls Timothy, who was created a *presbyter* by him, a *bishop*, FOR SO AT FIRST THE PRESBYTERS WERE CALLED. Among whom this was the course of governing Churches—that, as one withdrew, another took his place. And in Egypt, even to this day, the presbyters ordain in the bishop's absence. But, because the succeeding presbyters began to be found unworthy to hold the first place, the method *was changed*, the council providing that not order, but merit, should create a bishop.'

"Chrysostom was another Father who lived and wrote about the same time, or somewhat later. Here is what he says, in his homily on the Epistle to Timothy: 'The apostle having discoursed concerning the *bishops*, and described them, declaring what they ought to be, and from what they ought to abstain, omitting the order of *presbyters*, descends to the *deacons*. And why so? Because between bishop and presbyter there is scarcely any difference. And to them [the presbyters] is committed both the *instructions* and the PRESIDENCY of the Church; and whatever he said of *bishops* agrees also to *presbyters*. In *ordination alone* have they gone beyond the presbyters, and of this they seem to have *defrauded* them.'

"Theodoret, who wrote somewhat later still—early in the fifth century—commenting on the same passage, says, 'The apostles call a presbyter a bishop, as we showed when we expounded the Epistle to the Philippians, and which may also be learned from this place; for, after the precepts proper to bishops, he describes the things that belong to deacons. But, as I have said, they *of old* called the *same men* both bishops and presbyters.'

"So also others; but these are enough for our purpose, and perhaps too much for the patience of our friends."

"But let me ask," said Doctor Thinkwell, "if these same writers are not all referred to by the advocates of the Episcopacy, as admitting its existence and advocating its claims?"

“What if they are? They *did* admit its existence; and some of them were themselves a part of it. They *did* approve it, at least so far as to exercise the Episcopal authority themselves, or to submit to it in others. There is no difficulty in proving this; but what of it? Our question is not whether this rule of the bishops existed *then*; but whether it *had* existed from the first? and whether its existence then was not the result of a *change* in the original constitution of the Churches?

“I grant that there were bishops in the days of Jerome, and of Eusebius, the historian, who lived before Jerome. I grant that, in their day, the bishops were a higher order than the other clergy. I grant that the Churches were then *ruled by the bishops*. I grant that Eusebius gives us catalogues of the bishops whom he says had succeeded each other from the days of the apostles. But I say that the bishop of that day was not the bishop of the apostles' days. He is called by the same *name*, but he is not the same *thing*; and this I have proved by these Fathers themselves. It is just so with baptism. Christ's baptism was immersion. The Church of Rome has set aside immersion, and substituted pouring or sprinkling, and called this act baptism. The name is the same, but the thing is changed. It is just so with the Lord's Supper. The Church of Rome gives a bit of consecrated wafer to her communicants, but withholds the wine. The Supper instituted by our Lord was both bread and wine. She has *changed* the ordinance, but calls it by the same name. So it is in regard to deacons. The deacon of the New Testament and the first Churches was one appointed to attend to the *secular* affairs of the Church. As Jerome says, he was ‘the servant of tables and widows.’ But the Church of Rome and the Church of England have made him a minister of the word, and yet call him by the same name. Here is the fallacy by which the **simple and incautious** are entrapped and deluded. **It is the**

thing, and not the *name*, that we must look after. There is now, in some ecclesiastical establishments, called Churches, a class of officers called *bishops*; and there was in the Churches of Christ, as established by the apostles, a class of officers called *bishops*. Of this there is no doubt. But then, the modern bishop is *one* thing, and the scriptural bishop was *another* and a very *different* thing. The scriptural bishop was a simple pastor of a single Church, or sometimes the joint pastor, with several others, all his equals in rank, all called presbyters, and all called bishops, as in the address of Paul to those of Ephesus. The modern bishop is *not* the pastor of a single Church, jointly with others, or by himself alone. He is a *prelate*: counts other ministers his inferiors, and lords it over all the Churches in a diocese. The ancient bishop was the *servant* of a single Church: the modern is the *master* of many Churches. The ancient bishop was at first identical with the presbyter or elder. And even after the first distinction was made, when *that elder*, who was chosen, for the sake of order, to *preside* in the Church-meetings, was called *bishop*, he was still only the equal of his brother presbyters, the fellow-servant with them of the single Church to which they all belonged. But the modern bishop is the master of the *elders*, as well as of the Churches. He says to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh; and to all of them, Do thus, and they obey him.

“The ancient bishop *was chosen* by the presbyters and the Church to preside over them. The modern chooses the presbyters, and sends them to minister where he will. And yet men who are, or ought to be, familiar with all these facts, and these men the professed lovers of truth, the avowed ministers of Jesus, have the effrontery to contend that bishops, in this modern sense, have *always* existed in the Church, simply because they can trace the *word* down to the apostles themselves

"But I ask your pardon: I am talking too long. We have spent too much time already upon this point; especially as we shall probably have occasion to refer to it again, when we come to investigate the claims of the Episcopal Church. You will remember that it now came up incidentally, and not entirely in the order of our discussion. I have, however, redeemed my pledge. I have shown, by the testimony of standard historians, by the concessions of the most zealous advocates of the bishop's power, and by the Fathers themselves, that the Episcopate, in the modern understanding of it, was an *innovation* upon the order established by Christ. It was, as I have stated, probably the *first* of those changes by which the Churches were finally involved in utter apostasy. They cast off the rule of *Christ* as their sole Lord and King, and subjected themselves to the bishops."

"Was it not strange," asked Mr. Percy, "that this should have been done without resistance or remonstrance?"

"It was done, as Jerome says, '*paulatim*'—by little and little, so gradually as scarcely to excite alarm. But yet it was *not* done without remonstrance. How many complained, and yet submitted, we do not know. How many Churches refused to submit, history has not recorded. But we know that there were *many*, under various names, and in various places, who always protested against this usurpation. But when once the bishops had obtained the power, it was no light matter to venture to dispute their Divine right to govern; as may be seen in the case of *Ærius*, (not Arius, who denied our Lord's eternal Sonship, or, as some say, his Divinity; but *Ærius*,) who lived about the same time with Jerome, or a little earlier. He held the same opinion that Jerome and Augustine, Ambrose and Chrysostom did: namely, that in the *first* Churches bishops and presbyters were one; and that the *authority* which had then been usurped by the bishops, and was, for the most part, tamely acquiesced in by the Churches, was *not*

conferred by the *Scriptures*, but only existed by the custom of the Church. But, not like Jerome, and these others, whom the Catholics have since dubbed *saints*, he was determined to carry out his faith into his practice. The others acted as Chalmers, and McKnight, and many other eminent modern divines have done in regard to baptism. They admit that it was immersion which Christ commanded, and the first Churches practiced; and that the change to sprinkling was made without any express sanction of the Master. And yet they quietly coincide with the Church; and, while contending for immersion as the true baptism, practice the sprinkling which has, *by custom*, come into its place. So these ancient saints, while they contended and *proved* that the first bishops were not invested with dominion over the Churches, yet either exercised that dominion themselves, or quietly submitted to those who did. Ærius, however, sought to reform the error. He openly and boldly proclaimed that bishops are, by the *Scriptures*, in no way superior to the presbyters: that these were only different names for the same office. He declaimed against feasts, and fasts, and prayers for the dead, or to the dead; all which he regarded as *unscriptural*. He sought to bring the Churches back to the simple gospel standard. But by doing so, he roused a host of enemies on every side. He was quickly silenced as a minister: denounced as a *heretic*. His followers were excluded from the Churches, banished from the cities and towns, and obliged to hold their meetings (as the Waldenses did afterwards, for teaching the same doctrines) in the forests or the caverns of the mountains.

“But let us go back. You will recollect, Mrs. Percy, that we were endeavoring to answer your question, how it was that what had once been Churches of Jesus Christ, became the persecutors of the true believers and obedient disciples of the Lord. I said that the first step towards this unhappy result

was that by which the Churches lost their separate independence, and became the subjects of a hierarchy of *bishops*. They gave up their sole allegiance to Christ, and owned the rule of human masters. We have spent perhaps more time than we should in showing how that was done. But, simultaneous with that, and, like that, brought about by little and little, was another change, still more important. That was a change in the *government* of the Church: this was a change in the character of its constituent *membership*. That was a change of *external polity*: this was a change of the very materials of which it was composed. That set over the Church rulers whom Christ had not appointed: this introduced into the Church members whom Christ had not authorized. The first change, even before itself was fully consummated, did much to prepare the way for the introduction of the second; and the second did much in after years to perpetuate the first. Christ's Churches were at first, as we have seen, composed exclusively of those who had given evidence of conversion, and had professed a rational and personal belief in him as their Redeemer. They were a *spiritual* people, who had been *renewed* in the temper and disposition of their minds; in whom the carnal enmity of the natural heart had been supplanted with the love of God in Christ; in whom the darkness of the natural mind had been made light in the Lord; who had been subjects of an interior change so great that it was aptly designated a new birth, by which they were introduced into a new life, as was symbolized in their baptism; wherein their old life, their former self, was represented as dead and *buried* with Christ, and their present self as raised up again from the dead; so that they should henceforth walk in newness of life, or simply live a new life. The first Churches, I say, the true Churches of Jesus Christ, were composed, or designed to be composed, of such people as these. But very early after COUNCILS of bishops had usurped

the prerogative of Christ, and began to *make laws* for the government of the Churches, they changed the conditions of membership, and substituted *the repetition of a form of words* for an intelligent profession of a living faith. Grown persons, youth, and children, were taught, like parrots, to repeat the form of words; and when they had been thus prepared, they were initiated into the Church, and entitled to all its privileges. The Church was therefore soon composed of unconverted men; and they were taught that by the *ceremony* of their initiation, by the magic efficacy of their baptism, they had been made members of Christ and heirs of glory; and were ready enough to *obey* the behests of those *bishops* at whose hands they now were taught eternal life could only be obtained. Salvation was in the *sacraments*: the sacraments were in the *Church*, and could only be available when received at the hand of the *bishop*, or some one authorized by him. And what the bishop's blessing gave, the bishop's curse could take away. The bishop had the keys of heaven and hell. Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive. Not for time—that were a trifle—but his power reached beyond the grave, and was as lasting as eternity. Who would not fear the bishop? Then, on the other hand, the bishops loved power; and the bishops loved wealth. Strange as it may seem, they delighted in magnificent cathedrals, and splendid palaces, and princely ostentation. To gain wealth, they must have subjects; to multiply subjects was the shortest way to power and opulence. Now, each bishop claimed as his subject those who were baptized by him or under his direction. Each, therefore, had an interest in making the terms of entrance into the Church as easy as possible

“At first they gave instruction to adults, and when they could repeat the creed and catechism, admitted them to baptism. But they could not overlook the rising generation. I’

would soon control the wealth and power of the nation. That wealth and power must be made subservient to the Church. The *youth* therefore were all, so far as practicable, collected and catechized, and baptized. Then the children, as soon as they could learn the creed and say the needful formula, were brought into the Church. Then smaller children still, as soon as they could say the words as *prompted* at the time. And, at length, little, puling babes, who could not answer for themselves at all, but were obliged to have *sponsors* to say for them what older people had been required to say for themselves. When these water-made Christians, these unconverted minors, children and babes, grew up to manhood, *they were the Church*. They had no more love for Christ and for his cause, no more of his meekness, no more of his charity, no more of his justice, than if they had not been baptized; no more than the heathen. Yet they were the members; they were the deacons; they were the presbyters; they were the bishops; and is it any wonder that, like other unconverted men, they hated, and despised, and rejected, and persecuted the simple gospel and the pure religion of the meek and lowly Nazarene? Is it any wonder that a true believer, who had the courage to obey God rather than man; who protested against this monstrous metamorphosis of Christianity, and ventured to intimate that *this was not the Church which Christ established*, was at once denounced as a heretic, excommunicated as a schismatic, banished as a disturber of the *peace of the Church*, or *burnt*, as a warning to the faithful not to distrust the teachings of their priests and bishops? This is the process by which the first persecuting Churches were made; and this is the process by which every persecuting Church has been made, down to the present time. They have all brought in their *members* in childhood, or infancy; and they grow up *wicked* men, haters of Jesus, and persecutors of his people. No Church that bears the *Christian*

name, and which requires the same terms of membership that the Scriptures do, namely, personal penitence for sin, and personal faith in Christ, has ever persecuted; and it is remarkable that *every one of all* the Pedobaptist ecclesiastical establishments, *all* these so-called Churches of Christ, have, when they have had the power, been *persecutors* of those who could not conscientiously submit to their dictation."

"That, if true, is certainly a very remarkable fact," said the Doctor, "and very suggestive. I do not feel disposed to question it just now; nor will I ask you to-day for the authorities upon which you base the account you have just now given of the introduction of infant baptism. The picture you give is natural enough, and I could readily believe it, if properly authenticated. But I have always taken it for granted that infant baptism was, if not sanctioned by the apostles, one of the very earliest innovations on their practice, and that it was introduced with so great unanimity that there is no record of the time or manner of its coming in, or of any opposition to it. But I will not ask you for your testimony now. We have already had a long sitting, and we have yet another test to apply to the Church of Rome."

"That will not take us long. Our test is the ninth and the last. It says that, No apostate Church can be a Church of Christ. Not that a true Church may not, in process of time, by change of members, change of officers, and change of laws, cease to be a true Church, and thus become apostate; but that after she *has* thus apostatized, she is no Church of Christ, even though she may still retain the same name and the same external forms that she had at first. Christ's *institution*, called the Church, is to be permanent and perpetual. But as many an individual *example* of that institution has died out and ceased to be, so many a one has gone out from Christ's jurisdiction, and associated with his enemies. But when it *has* done so it is not a Church of Christ; wher it

has done so, it has no authority in his kingdom; when it has done so, its members are no longer members of Christ's Church; its ordinances are no longer Christian ordinances, its ministry is no longer the Christian ministry. *All its official acts are null and void.* It cannot therefore be the medium of baptism to members or ordination to ministers. This is self-evident. It is a thing of necessity, unless you admit the absurdity that an organization which is *not* a Church of Christ, and to which Christ has given *no* authority, is yet entirely competent to perform, in a legal and valid manner those acts which he has intrusted exclusively to his Church.

"I trust our friends here will *notice* this point; I dwell upon it because it is of vast importance."

"How so, Mr. Courtney? I do not discover any thing so *very* important in it," said Theodosia; "but I suppose it is my stupidity that prevents me from seeing it."

"I will tell you. The Episcopalians, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and, I believe, all those denominations who are called *Protestants*, believe and teach that the Church of Rome, so far from being a true Church of Christ, is that *Antichrist* which was foretold by the apostles. They have the best of reasons for this faith. There is no doubt that they are in this entirely correct. And yet, while they thus believe and teach, they cannot deny the fact that *they all received their baptism and their ordination* from the Church of Rome. Now, if Rome were never a Church of Christ, they could not even pretend that it had any right to baptize or ordain, any more than the Mormon society at Nauvoo had. Baptism and ordination conferred by them, and received through them, would have been no more *Christian* baptism than if it had been received from the followers of Mohammed in Mecca. They therefore say that Rome *was once* a true Church, but that she has *apostatized* and become what she is. As she was once a Church, she could receive and transmit

true Christian baptism and valid ordination. Now, our position is, that from the day she became *apostate* she *ceased to be a Church of Christ*. She was no more a Church of his than if she never had been one. She had no more authority to act as the administrator of the laws of his kingdom than if she had never possessed that authority. Her baptism, *after that*, was no more Christian baptism than the washing of the heathen in the pagan temples of their idol gods was Christian baptism. The ordination of a minister by her authority and for her service, was no more Christian ordination than the consecration of a priest of Jupiter was Christian ordination; for she was no more a Christian Church, and had no more authority to act in the capacity of a Christian Church than any other company of those who hated holiness and persecuted the true disciples of the Lord.

“This surely will not admit of doubt; it needs no argument. If any one will dispute this, it is hardly worth while to reason with him. Christ gave the authority to administer his ordinances and execute his laws to his Church as the executive of *his* kingdom. Now, when any assembly *ceases* to be HIS Church, it has no longer his commission. All its rights are forfeited. It cannot carry them out of the kingdom; it cannot exercise them as Christ’s executive, when itself no longer belongs to Christ. A provincial government that has revolted against its king, thrown off its allegiance, instituted new officers, made new laws, received other subjects, and directed all its powers, physical and mental, to the destruction of the faithful subjects of their former king, are surely not legal administrators of the ordinances of his kingdom. They may still *claim* to act by his authority; they may still employ his *name* to give apparent sanction to their work; they may deny that they are rebels; they may declare that the king has *no other faithful subjects but themselves*, and gives authority to none but them. Yet all this will not legal

ize their acts. Their acts will no more possess the *actual* sanction of the king than if they had been done in their own name, or in the name of some foreign potentate, whose authority they had never pretended to recognize. The *faithful subjects* of the king can no more recognize their acts as legal than if they had never made any part of the kingdom. Now, suppose a subject of a foreign power should be *naturalized*, and so entitled to all the rights of citizenship in this revolted province, and should thence pass over to some province which had continued faithful to the king; would *that naturalization* given by this revolted province entitle him to citizenship in the *real* kingdom? He has come among the rebels; he has been received by the rebels; he has been naturalized by the rebels; and he is on this account entitled to citizenship among the rebels. But now, when he comes among the faithful, he must be naturalized by the faithful. They cannot recognize the authority of the rebels to admit citizens to *their* kingdom. If he become a citizen there, he must be naturalized there, and by the legal and undisputed authority of their king.

“So, when a subject of Satan comes to an apostate, a revolted Church, and is received by them, baptized by them, and thus made one of them, and entitled to all the privileges of Church-membership among them, he does not by this act become a member of Christ's kingdom. This baptism does not make him a member of any true Church of Christ. And if he should desire to leave the rebels and unite with a true and faithful Church, that Church could not recognize as legal, or receive as valid, the baptism of the apostates. *And if she should receive him as a member, without baptizing him, she would by that act acknowledge that his previous baptism had been legal and valid; and, consequently, that the revolted and apostate Church was, at the time of conferring it, just as much a true Church of Christ, and just as truly authorized*

by Christ to receive members and administer his ordinance, as she is herself.

“So also in regard to ordination. Suppose, in the revolted province, some one who had been received and naturalized and made a citizen among the rebels, should be by them chosen to office, by them duly initiated and commissioned as an *officer* to exercise among them the authority belonging to his station; and he should choose, afterward, to go over among the faithful subjects of the king, and claim that he was entitled to exercise the authority of his office *there*, in the real kingdom, what would the faithful subjects of the king be bound to do? Must they recognize his authority? must they submit to his rule? If they do so, they admit that the acts of the rebels are as legal and valid as their own acts, done by order of the king. They could do no such thing. If they received him as a *citizen*, they must first *naturalize* him again; for his naturalization by the rebels is nothing to them; (it did not make him a member of the kingdom, but only of a community of rebels.) Then, if they desired his services as an *officer* they would elect him as such, and commission him as such. And until he had been thus chosen and commissioned, he could surely be no more an officer among them, and they could no more recognize any official act of his, than as though the rebels had never dreamed of giving him a commission in their revolted government.

“So, when an apostate, a revolted *Church*, has first, by their unauthorized baptism, made one a member of their apostate communion, and then appointed him to office, and commissioned him as a minister to exercise his proper functions in their rebel assemblies, this does not make him a minister of any true Church of Christ. This does not empower him to exercise the office of a minister, or make any of his ministerial acts legal and valid, within Christ's visible kingdom. Christ has intrusted the ~~selecting~~ and commissioning

of his ministers to *his* Churches, and not to Churches which hate his people and his cause, and employ all their powers to injure and destroy them. If this man is to perform any official act within the true kingdom of Christ, he must first be *ordained* by legal authority within the kingdom; and every official act which he shall take upon him to perform, without such legal ordination, is illegal and invalid; it is null and void, as though it never had been done.

"This is surely all very plain; and I cannot conceive how any man of common sense, who will take five minutes to think about it, can ever venture to doubt or dispute it."

"Certainly, I see all that," said Theodosia; "but I do not yet quite apprehend the vast importance which you seem to attach to it. I do not yet perceive the tremendous consequences which are to follow from these self-evident truths."

"These consequences," replied Mr. Courtney, "*are so tremendous, and they follow so necessarily and indisputably from the premises which we have laid down, that, when they are seen and felt, the mind almost instinctively rejects the premises; though, when seen without the consequences, it cannot help admitting their truth, and, even after the consequences are fully realized, can find no logical means of setting them aside.*

"As one who stands and gazes at the desolation in the path of the avalanche, which rushed but yesterday over some beauteous, and luxuriant, and densely-populated valley, can hardly realize what he beholds; but exclaims, even while he sees it all, '*This cannot be.* Surely this is not the place which yesterday was thronging with busy life and studded with peaceful dwellings, in which were beating a thousand human hearts, with all their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears; and now thus desolate; now thus dead. And yet it *must* be so. This is the place; and there is now the ponderous mass which made this fearful ruin!' So he who can be brought to

look this subject fairly and fully in the face; who will bring his mind and hold it to the point until he sees and realizes the premises we have laid down. and the conclusion that *must*, of logical necessity, follow, is apt to feel as though the mind were stunned and stupefied with the result. And though he cannot show any flaw in the argument, or offer any reason why he should think it false, he yet exclaims, '*It surely cannot be true.*'

"The consequence which I have spoken of is this: An apostate Church, *after it has become apostate*, is not a Church of Christ. Her baptism is not valid Christian baptism. Her ministers are not legal Christian ministers. Her acts, *as a Church*, are, one and all, utterly null and void. Now, it is admitted by Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists, that *the Church of Rome* IS THUS APOSTATE, and that she WAS thus apostate *before the Reformation*. If so, she had before that time become incapable of conferring baptism or ordination. Her baptism was *not* Christian baptism, and her ministers had *no* authority as the ministers of Christ. And yet the *only* baptism and the *only* ordination which any of these denominations have, they received *from the Church of Rome*. It follows, therefore, if an apostate Church cannot confer valid Christian baptism; nay, if the baptism of *Antichrist* is not valid Christian baptism, the founders and first members of these Churches were not baptized; and if the *ordination of Antichrist* could not create a Christian minister, their ministers had never been ordained. And now, if baptism is a necessary prerequisite to Church membership, so that an assembly, even of good people, cannot be a true, visible Church of Christ, unless its members have been baptized,—not into Mohammedanism, by the authority of the false prophet; not into Mormonism, by the authority of Joe Smith; not into Roman Catholicism, by the authority of the Pope; but into a *genuine Christianity*, by

the authority of Jesus,—then they *could not*, until they *had been baptized*, have become *true Churches of Christ*. And unless *genuine* and valid baptism can be conferred by those who have themselves not been baptized, and unless true and valid ordination can be conferred by those who have themselves neither been baptized nor ordained, then they have *never* received baptism, and have *never* had a legal ministry; and, consequently, *never have been*, ARE NOT NOW, and NEVER CAN BE, true Churches and true ministers of Christ, until they shall have been baptized into a real Church of baptized believers.

“They *admit* that baptism is an *essential* prerequisite to Church-membership.

“They *admit* that no one can give true Christian baptism who has not been himself baptized.

“They *admit* that baptism conferred by Mohammedans or Mormons, by a Temperance Society, or a lodge of Odd-Fellows or Freemasons, would not be Christian baptism; but that, to be such, it must be given by a *true Church of Christ*.

“They *admit* that they received their baptism from *Rome*.

“And they *admit*—nay, they contend and *prove*, that Rome, so far from being a true Church of Christ, was *Anti-christ* himself—the man of sin—the son of perdition—the apocalyptic beast—the dragon that made war upon the saints, and that drove the true Church into the wilderness, and that *wore out the saints* with cruel and incessant persecutions.

“They admit all this, and they therefore *must admit* that they have never had true baptism, and are not true Churches of Jesus Christ.

“They may stand and stare at the ghastly array of their admissions, and at the overwhelming ruin in which these admissions bury up all their claims to be regarded as true Churches. But they cannot deny that they have made these admissions. They cannot help making them again *They*

must admit these things, or deny what is as open and plain as the day to every thinking mind. They *dare not* dispute the premises, and they *cannot* resist the consequence. They may lift up their hands and stupidly exclaim, '*This cannot be so*;' but IT IS SO, nevertheless. They may say it is unchristian and uncharitable thus to *unchurch* almost the whole of Christendom. We do not do it; it is the *logic of the case* that does the work. Neither we nor *they* themselves can deny the conclusion, if these admissions are once made. They may go back, if they choose, and *retract* these admissions. They may take them one by one, and see if they *can*, see if they *dare*, as conscientious adherents to the simple truth, retract a single one of them.

"Let them try it. Let them begin with the last. Will they deny that Rome is Antichrist? We will prove it to them by arguments from the principal defenders of each of the denominations. We will prove it from Luther, from Calvin, from Baxter, from Doddridge, from Scott, from Benson, from Adam Clarke, from Wesley, from Chalmers. Or, if they do not like their own authorities, we will prove it by a comparison of the *historical facts* with the Scripture predictions. Nay, further, if they deny that Rome is Antichrist; if they contend that Rome is, as she claims to be, the true Church of Christ, then it will *follow, just as certainly* as before, that THEY *are NOT* true Churches, though on different grounds. If Rome be the *true* Church, then they who went out from Rome were *heretics* and *schismatics*, and they legally are *excinded* and *excluded* from the Church. For Rome, by the authority that was in her as Christ's executive, has cut them off and consigned them to perdition. So, whichever horn of the dilemma they may take, they cannot go behind the last of these admissions. If Rome *was* the true Church; if Rome *was* authorized to exercise the authority of the kingdom of Christ; if Rome *was* that body to which Christ had com

mitted the ordinances and laws of his kingdom for preservation and execution, then the act of Rome, by which they were cut off, was a *legal* act; and they were *cast out* of the Church, and, of course, had no more authority to baptize, and preach, and found Churches, than a deposed and excluded minister would have now.

“If you say that they *withdrew*, and were not cut off, it does not help the case at all; for, on the supposition that Rome *was* the true Church, they, in that case, went out from the true Church of Christ, and of course no longer made a part of it, and had no authority in it. But the first reformers *did not* withdraw. They remained in the Church as long as they could. They had no thought of forming a *new* Church, but only of reforming the old. They, as members of the Church of Rome, *protested* against her faith and practices. And for this they were excluded, anathematized, and persecuted, by that apostate, corrupt, and tyrannical hierarchy. But Protestants will not, they cannot, they dare not, in the face of their own denunciations of Rome as an apostate Church, and as Antichrist, recall what they have said, and fraternize with her as a true Church of Christ. *And if they do, it will not affect our argument; for* WE HAVE PROVED HER FALSE, though they may count her true. We have tried her by the Word of God, and found that she has not *one* single mark of a *true* Church of Christ. And yet, if she had *every mark but one*, she would not be a true Church of Christ. If, therefore, she ever was a true Church, she has become *apostate*. If she is apostate *now*, she *has been* so ever since she possessed the same peculiarities upon which we have rejected her claims; and this was, to say the least, long before the Reformation. The *only* ground on which a consistent Protestant can stand and claim that those who received their baptism and their ordination in Rome, and yet, on coming out of her, were true Church-members, with valid

baptism and legal ordination, is this : they may contend that when these members were received and baptized, and when these ministers were ordained, the Church of Rome was a *true Church of Christ* ; but, in the interval which elapsed between their baptism and ordination and their final withdrawal or expulsion, she had become the apostate seat of sin and abode of every unclean and hateful bird. But this they did not pretend at the time. No one will venture to pretend it now. Bad as Rome was at the time of Luther, she was not as bad as she had been. Her pope and cardinals, bishops and priests, vile as they were, were decent men, in comparison with the monsters of vice, and cruelty, and profligacy, which filled her sacred (!) offices in the tenth and eleventh centuries. She was just then only selling for money the privilege to sin ; but she had long been accustomed to sell for money the right to grant such privileges. She was then only burning now and then a heretic ; but she had long before been used to murder them by thousands.







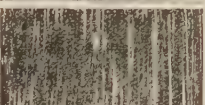
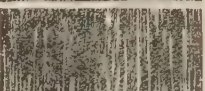

“The apostasy was not only begun, but matured, hundred years before Luther was born. It was not then a thing of yesterday. Luther was born under an apostate Church ; he was baptized into an apostate Church, and made a priest of an apostate Church ; and his companions were all of them baptized into an apostate Church, if they were baptized at all. The *only* baptism and the *only* ordination that he or any of them received, was that of a Church that had *not one single mark or feature* of the Church of Christ ; and, consequently, their baptism and ordination was no better than if they had received it in a Mohammedan mosque, or a Mormon temple, or a Freemason’s lodge. And since they could not give what they had not received, the so-called Churches which they set up have never had, and have not now, and never can have, the ordinances of a Church of Christ, until they receive them from a true and legal Church

"But we need not forestall the results of our coming examination of their several claims. We have now done with that of the Church of Rome. We have first '*searched the Scriptures,*' and found what were there laid down as the peculiar characteristics of a true Church of Christ. We have tried to find if Rome possessed these characteristics, and discovered that she has not *one*."

"I have," said Mr. Percy, "busied myself, as we have gone along, in making a sort of picture, or diagram, of this Church. As we had nine marks, I divided this blank page into nine equal spaces, and writing the marks in the margin, determined, if she was found to possess any one of them, to leave a white space for it; if not, to make it black. And here you see it all black, in every space, from the top to the bottom."

"It is a good conception," said the Doctor; "and I hope you will give us a similar diagram of every Church whose claims may come before us. But we are tired now; let us adjourn; and when we meet to-morrow, take up the Church of England."

DIAGRAM OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

SIGNS OR MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH.		MARKS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.
<p>1st.</p> <p>It consists only of professed believers in Christ.</p>		<p>It includes little children who cannot believe. See p. 187.</p>
<p>2d.</p> <p>Its members have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.</p>		<p>Its members were sprinkled in infancy. See pp. 188-194.</p>
<p>3d.</p> <p>It is a local organization, and independent of all others.</p>		<p>It is not a local, independent organization, but a vast hierarchy. See pp. 195-197.</p>
<p>4th.</p> <p>It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no other authority above its own.</p>		<p>It has the Pope for its head and lawgiver, and receives Christ's law as subordinate to his. See p. 197.</p>
<p>5th.</p> <p>Its members have become such by their own voluntary act.</p>		<p>They were made members in childhood, without their knowledge or consent. See p. 198.</p>
<p>6th.</p> <p>It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.</p>		<p>It denies the fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith, and makes it depend on works and sacraments. See p. 199.</p>
<p>7th.</p> <p>It began with Christ, and has continued to the present time.</p>		<p>Christ did not establish any hierarchy. The Roman Catholic Church began long after the apostles. See p. 199.</p>
<p>8th.</p> <p>It never persecutes for conscience' sake</p>		<p>It has always and everywhere been a persecutor, when it had the power. See pp. 201-206.</p>
<p>9th.</p> <p>No apostate Church can be a Church of Christ.</p>		<p>If it was ever a true Church, it apostatized when it became a hierarchy, or a persecutor. See pp. 245-256.</p>

SEVENTH DAY'S TRAVEL

"You will recollect," said the Doctor, at the commencement of the conversation this morning, "that there was one point suggested by your remarks yesterday, concerning which I desired some further information; not so much because I had any doubt of the correctness of your statements, as because I desire to know upon what sort of evidence you made assertions so very different from those I have been accustomed to hear."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Courtney; "I remember it perfectly. You have all your life been taught, as all Pedobaptists are, by preachers, and books, and pamphlets, and papers, that the baptism of babes dates from the time of Christ. And I asserted that it was introduced at a much later period. I do not love to make assertions without giving the proof, and am very glad that you are disposed to hear the testimony. I will make it as concise as possible, and it will be as convincing as you can possibly desire. I will set your mind at rest on this point at once and for ever.

"And I say, in the *first* place, if the baptism of babes was *not* practised by Christ and the apostles, it *must* have been introduced afterwards. This is self-evident. But now, we have carefully examined the record of the sayings and doings of Christ and the apostles, from Matthew to Revelation; and though we have found the baptism of many thousands of men and women expressly mentioned, we have not discovered any account of, or any allusion to, the baptism of one solitary

babe. We must therefore, if the record be not incomplete on this most important point of Christian faith and practice, admit that *no infant was baptized*. At any rate, we must so decide, unless those who say that infant baptism was then practiced will show at least one plain, undoubted fact on which to base their assertion. But such a fact the most intelligent and candid Pedobaptists do not so much as *pretend* to have. They say, with their learned and zealous advocate, Professor Stuart, ‘Commands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament relative to it I do not find.’

“No one ever investigated this subject with more laborious scrutiny than Dr. Wall, the author of the ‘History of Infant Baptism;’ yet he is forced to acknowledge that, ‘Among all the persons that are recorded as having been baptized by the apostles, there is no express mention of any infant.’

“So Luther says, expressly, ‘It cannot be proved by the Sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.’

“So the learned Erasmus, in his note on Romans v. 14. ‘Paul does not seem to treat about infants. It was not yet the custom for infants to be baptized.’

“So the Magdeburg Centuriators: ‘Concerning the baptism of infants, there are no examples of which we read in the first century.’

“Bishop Burnet expressly declares, ‘There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants.’

“I might extend this catalogue indefinitely; but I need not do so. I will only add the testimony of the learned Limbroch, given in his System of Divinity: ‘There is no express command for it in Scripture. Nay, all those passages wherein baptism is commanded, do immediately relate to adult persons, since they are ordered to be instructed, and faith is prerequisite as a necessary qualification, which [things] are pecu-

liar to the adult There is no instance can be produced from whence it may indisputably be inferred that any child was baptized by the apostles. The necessity of Pedobaptism was never asserted by any council before that of Carthage, held in the year 418. We own that there is no precept nor undoubted instance in Scripture of infant baptism.'

"Now, since *we* have searched for it in the Record, and could not find it; and since these and others of the most learned, most industrious, and most zealous advocates of infant baptism admit that *they* have searched for it and cannot find it, it seems to me that we are fully justified in concluding *that it is not there.*"

"But, Mr. Courtney, you say these men were themselves baptizers of infants. They were pious, conscientious men How *could* they practice and commend that which had no Scripture authority?"

"That is a hard question, sir. If they were still alive, I would like to ask it of themselves. I suppose most of them, did they venture to speak out truly the real ground of their faith and practice, would give it somewhat in the language of Mr. Walker, in his modest plea for infant baptism: 'Where authority from the Scriptures fail, there *the custom of the Church* is to be held as law. It doth not follow that our Saviour gave no precept for the baptizing of infants because no such precept is particularly expressed in the Scriptures; for our Saviour spake many things to his disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before his passion and after his resurrection, which are not written in the Scriptures. And who can say but that among those many unwritten sayings of his, there might be an express precept for infant baptism?'"

"Certainly," exclaimed Theodosia. "Who can say? And who can say that there was not among those unwritten sayings of his a complete description of purgatory? Who can say that there were not express directions concerning the consecration

of monks and nuns? Who can say that all the mumnery of Popery was not detailed in those unwritten conversations?"

"It seems very evident to me," said Dr. Thinkwell, "that if He did give them such an express precept, they were very disobedient to his requirement; for of all the thousands whom they actually baptized, we do not read that they ever baptized a single infant; and never in a single instance so much as intimated to those whom they received and organized into Churches, that it was their duty and their privilege to bring their infants in with them. If he gave them such a precept, I can only say, they must have forgotten all about it, and the Holy Spirit failed to bring it to their remembrance, as Jesus promised he should do concerning the things which he had told them."

"We have nothing at all to do," said Mr. Courtney, "with *traditions* on this or any other point of faith or practice. The custom of the Churches, except so far as that custom is recorded in the Book, is nothing to us; and yet I will show that the *custom* of the Churches was *not* to baptize infants for several generations after the apostles. I say, first, infant baptism was not commanded by Christ, or practiced by the apostles. It did not exist up to the time when the canon of Scripture was completed. This I take for granted from the simple fact, that neither we, nor its most diligent and capable and zealous advocates have been able to discover any trace of it in the Book.

"I will now prove to you that it did not exist in the century next after the apostles. What sort of testimony do you require? Will you have the statements of ecclesiastical historians? Wallafridus Strabo, a Catholic ecclesiastical historian of the ninth century, says, 'It should be observed, that in the primitive times, the grace of baptism was usually given to those *only* who were arrived at such maturity of body and mind that they could understand what were the benefits of baptism; what was to be confessed and believed; and, finally,

what was to be observed by those who are regenerated in Christ.'

"In fact, there is a canon of a Roman Catholic council, held at Paris in the year eight hundred and twenty-nine, which says the same thing: 'In the beginning of the Holy Church of God, no one was admitted to baptism unless he had before been instructed in the sacrament of faith and of baptism, which is proved by the words of St. Paul, Rom. vi. 3, 4.'

"Salmasius, an eminent French Roman Catholic, says, 'In the first two centuries no one was baptized except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer, because of those words, "He that believeth and is baptized." Thence the order of catechumens in the Church. Then also it was the constant custom to give the Lord's Supper to those catechumens immediately after their baptism.'

"Ludovicus Vives declares, 'No one in former times was admitted to the sacred baptistery except he was of age, understood what the mystical water meant, desired to be washed in it, and expressed that desire more than once, of which practice we have yet a faint resemblance in our baptism of infants; for an infant of only a day or two old is yet asked [in the Lutheran Church] whether he will be baptized; and this question is asked three times: in whose name the sponsors answer, He does desire it.'

"Curcellæus says, 'The baptism of infants in the first two centuries after Christ was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and the following ages it was generally received. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. In the former ages no trace of it appears. It was introduced without the command of Christ: and therefore,' he says in another place, 'this rite is observed by us as an *ancient* custom, but not as an apostolical tradition.'

“To the same effect speak many of the most learned Europeans who have, with every possible facility for such investigations, made the customs of the ancient Church their study.

“Thus the Magdeburg Centuriators concerning the first century say, ‘In this age they baptized only the adult or aged, whether Jews or Gentiles; and as to the manner of baptizing, it was by dipping or plunging in the water, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.’ Of the second century they say, ‘It doth not appear from any approved authors that there was any mutation or change in respect to baptism from the first century.’ Of the third they say, ‘As to the rite of baptism in the Churches of *Asia*, we have no testimony of any alteration; but concerning the African Churches, there were great corruptions, in opinion at least, if not in practice;’ and instance the introduction of the baptism of infants, which was opposed by Tertulian.

“Dr. Mosheim says of the first century, ‘*No persons were admitted to baptism but such as had been previously instructed into the principal points of Christianity, and had also given satisfactory proofs of pious dispositions and upright intentions.*’ And of the second century, ‘The persons to be baptized, after they had repeated the creed, confessed, and renounced their sins, particularly the Devil and his pompous allurements, were immersed under water, and received into Christ’s kingdom by a solemn invocation.’

“These authorities are none of them Baptists. They every one belong to Churches which consist of those baptized in infancy. They all have every motive to find infant baptism in the first Churches if they can. They none of them have any conceivable interest in advancing Baptist sentiments; and one would think the united testimony of such men, upon a question of ecclesiastical history, would be decisive. I would say, if I were talking on any other subject, that he who would, without a careful personal examination of the evidences, ven-

ture to assert, in opposition to all this, that infant baptism existed in the first two centuries, was either a liar or a fool. But I know the force of religious prejudice, and will not use such language. I will, on the contrary, suppose that even you and these good friends around me are not yet convinced. I have given you the simple declarations of very learned and eminent men (themselves Pedobaptists) who before making those declarations had gone back into the musty records of antiquity, and made a careful and laborious search for the real facts. After such examination they expressly depose that the first and second centuries knew nothing of infant baptism. I can for my own part see no reason why any man should ask for further witnesses; but we have others, and I will bring them in, and they shall testify.

“There are witnesses which show that even to a much later day than this, infant baptism was the exception, and not, as now in Pedobaptist Churches, the general rule—I mean the baptisteries. The Christians continued to baptize in streams, and pools, and baths until the middle of the third century. Justin Martyr says, the candidates ‘Were brought to a place where there was water.’ And Tertullian says, ‘It made no difference whether it were the sea, or a pool, or a lake, a river or a bath.’ But about the middle of the third century, shortly after infant baptism began to be rather proposed than practiced, the Churches began to build special places for baptism, especially in the towns and cities. These baptisteries were outside the churches, and consisted of a large pool enclosed in a building, and covered by a cupola, or dome. Now, the *most ancient* of these baptisteries were arranged at great cost for the immersion of adults. The pools were large enough and deep enough to swim in, and by the ancients were sometimes called swimming places. It was not until after the fifth century that the *font* was found in the place of the *pool*, and not until the fourteenth that the *basin* took the place of the *font*. Now

these, though silent, are most convincing witnesses. The first baptisteries were contrived and fitted for the immersion of adults. The fonts, reduced in size, first to the standard of youths, and then to that of babes, show the gradual incomming of the immersion of infants; and the substitution of the basin shows the introduction of sprinkling.

"But, not to dwell on this, I wish to call your attention to another and a most conclusive fact. It is this *All the ancient formularies of the baptismal service are arranged for adults*; or, at least, for those who could understand and answer the questions for themselves. In the *earliest* liturgies and rituals there is no provision made for infants. They are no more recognized as the proper subjects of baptism than are the worshippers of Jupiter."

"I do not see how you can prove that," said the Doctor, "unless you can give us the rituals to examine for ourselves, or show us the testimony of some competent and credible witness who has examined them."

"It is in my power to do both at the same time. I have in my trunk a work, recently published in London, which brings to light much that was not known before, and clears away the rubbish which defaced and concealed much that was partly understood concerning the faith and practice of the first Churches. No one, who will follow the learned author through all the various paths by which he has come to his final conclusions, will be disposed to doubt that he has at length discovered and brought to view the real picture of the ancient Church. I will get it, and show you what was the practice of that Church concerning baptism. The author, who is the learned Chevalier Bunsen, is not a Baptist. He has no object in advancing Baptist sentiments. He is a Pedobaptist scholar, who, by vast labor and research, has endeavored to discover beneath the rubbish which false learning had heaped upon it, the beautiful form of the apostolical Church. Not,

indeed, as it existed in the apostles' days; not as it ~~was~~ before it had been at all corrupted by false doctrine or unauthorized practices; but as it was from the second to the fifth century. This book is called 'HIPPOLYTUS AND HIS AGE.' It is based upon the discovery of a long-lost manuscript of that ancient bishop, who lived and wrote in the third century. But besides this manuscript, Bunsen, the translator of it, has brought together, from many and various sources, the most reliable and authentic accounts of the age when Hippolytus lived."

Mr. Courtney went to his state-room for the book, and presently returned with the third volume, containing what purports to be the "Church and House Book of the Ancient Christians."

"We will not have time," said he, "to read this book to-day. I will merely call your attention to the fact recorded on the fifth page, that those who would be baptized must first be brought to the minister to *be instructed*. On the eighth page, we learn that the course of instruction ordinarily continued *three years*, though this depended on their course of life. After this they were examined, the correctness of their lives duly certified by those who had brought them for instruction; and after fasting, bathing, exorcism, etc., they were divested of their clothing and immersed in water. (Pp. 18-22.) Then, after baptism, they go up out of the water, are anointed with oil, signed with the sign of the cross, clothed in white garments, and so return to the Church, where the Lord's Supper is at once administered to them.

"We see, therefore, that all these fooleries of exorcism, unction, and chrism, together with the sign of the cross, which have no scriptural authority, had come into use *long before* infant baptism; and if the usage of the ancient Church can establish any thing not commanded in Scripture, these things stand on better ground than it does. But, although they had so far departed from the simplicity of the gospel as

to introduce this senseless mummary, they had not yet learned to make one a Christian without his own consent. And Mr. Bunsen, on page 179, makes a very plain summing up of the whole matter. I will read it to you: 'The Church adhered rigidly to the principle as constituting the true import of the baptism ordained by Christ, that no one can be a member of the communion of saints but by his own free act and deed, his own solemn vow, made in the presence of the Church. It was with this understanding that the candidate for baptism was immersed in water and admitted as a brother upon his confession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It understood baptism, therefore, in the exact sense of the First Epistle of St. Peter, iii. 21, not as being a mere bodily purification, but as a vow made to God, with a good conscience, through faith in Jesus Christ. This vow was preceded by a confession of faith, made in the face of the Church, in which the catechumen expressed that faith in Christ, and in the sufficiency of the salvation offered by him. It was a vow to live for the time to come to God, and for his neighbor—not to the world and for self; a vow of faith in his becoming a child of God, through the communion with his only-begotten Son in the Holy Ghost; a vow of the most solemn kind, for life and for death. The keeping of this pledge was the condition of continuance in the Church. Its infringement entailed repentance or excommunication. All Church discipline was based upon this voluntary pledge, and the responsibility thereby self-imposed. How could such a vow be received without examination? How could such examination be passed without instruction and observation?

"As a general rule, the ancient Church fixed three years as the period for this preparation; supposing the candidate, whether a heathen or a Jew, to be competent to receive it. With Christian children the condition was the same, except that the term of probation was curtailed according to circum-

stances. *Pedobaptism*, in the more modern sense, meaning thereby baptism of new-born infants, with the vicarious promises of parents or other sponsors, WAS UTTERLY UNKNOWN TO THE EARLY CHURCH, not only down to the end of the second, but indeed to the middle of the third century. We shall show, in a subsequent page, how this practice originated in the baptism of children of a more advanced age.' "

Mr. Courtney then turned to page 186, and read,

"THE EXAMINATION.—In the third and last year of the preparation, the catechumens were called *competentes*, or candidates, as they had been called hearers in the second. Before they were set apart from the rest, in immediate preparation for their baptism, an *examination* was made as to their life and conduct during the period of probation. . . . It is unnecessary to say that this examination was a *public* one. The *congregation* [the *ekklesia*] was, and continued to be, the supreme judge. . . . If the candidates passed this ordeal, they were first bathed and pronounced personally clean. They fasted on Friday, and met together solemnly on Saturday. Thereupon they were commanded to pray. They knelt down and received the bishop's blessing, who exorcised every unclean spirit. . . . The bishop breathed upon each of them, as the Lord did upon his disciples, and then *sealed* them (as the text-book expresses) on the forehead, ears, and lips—doubtless with the sign of the cross. . . . At the dawn of Sunday, the baptismal font was filled, accompanied by a blessing, which corresponds exactly with the prayers [which they] used in consecrating the elements used for the Lord's Supper. The deacons assisted the men, and the deaconesses the women, to take off their ornaments and put on the baptismal dress. They were then presented to one of the presbyters, who called solemnly on each of them to renounce Satan and all his services and all his works. . . . After this solemn renunciation he was anointed by the presbyter

with the oil of exorcism . . . The deacon and deaconess accompanied the neophytes into the water, and made each of them, in turn, repeat after them a confession of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or respond to it with the words, I believe. . . . The confession was three times repeated, being uttered before each of the three immersions. . . . After that followed the true baptismal unction with the precious oil, the so-called chrisma. . . . The ceremony concluded with the Christian kiss. . . . After this, the baptized persons were clothed in white and conducted into the church.' When, after repeating the Lord's prayer in the name of the whole congregation, to show that each one was now a priest, 'They partook of the Lord's Supper, in which milk and honey were set before them, as well as bread and wine, doubtless as symbols of their being, as it were, newly born.'

"Now, what I say," continued Mr. Courtney, "is this: however far all this may be from the practice of Christ and the apostles, it is utterly inconsistent with the idea that those who were the subjects of baptism could be little infants or any way incapable of witnessing a good profession. And if we read in this age or the next of the baptism of *children*, we may be sure that they are not *little babes*, but such as could be instructed, could believe and make profession of their faith."

"But Bunsen promised to tell us, if I heard you rightly," said Theodosia, "how it was that children at a later day came to be received. Can you find us that place?"

"It follows directly what we have been looking at. Here, on the 191st page, is the beginning of what he says on this point: 'Baptism is indeed called a new birth—*regeneration*. But in what sense? Was it a sort of magical conversion of the curse into a blessing, effected now in the case of the infant by the act of sprinkling? Was it a forgiving of sins not intended to be brought back to the recollection of the parents or

the sponsors who were present, but to be applied to the infant itself?

“The ancient Church knew no more than do the Gospels and the apostles of such superstition, which contains less spirituality than many of the *lustrations* of the old world, and not much more than the *taurobolia* and *criobolia*, mysteries of the last stages of heathenism, purporting to purify the neophyte by the blood of victims. On the contrary, she bears authentic testimony in all her ordinances against this corruption and misunderstanding, as in other cases the origin was innocent; and I think that we are at this moment better able than either the defenders or the opponents of infant baptism have hitherto been, to tell how it originated. A passage in our Alexandrian Church-book gives the true explanation of the assertion of Origen, himself an Alexandrian, that the baptism of children was an apostolic tradition. And it removes the origin of infant baptism from Tertullian and Hippolytus to the end of our present period; *Cyprian* being the *first* Father who, *impelled by a fanatical enthusiasm, and assisted by a bad interpretation of the Old Testament, established it as a principle.* . . . The difference between the ante-Nicene and the later Church was essentially this: the later Church, with the exception of converts, only baptized new-born infants, and she did so on principle. The *ancient* Church, as a general rule, baptized adults, and only after they had gone through the course of instruction; and as the exception, only *Christian* children who had not yet arrived at years of maturity, *but never infants.* . . . Cyprian, and some other African bishops, his contemporaries, at the close of the third century, were the first who viewed baptism in the light of a washing away of the universal sinfulness of human nature, and connected this idea with that ordinance of the Old Testament. *circumcision.*’ And he goes on to show, that it was on this ground that it was applied to babes, to wash away their heredi-

tary or original sin. Hence the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

Now, not only Bunsen, but all these writers whom I have quoted as authorities, are, if not opponents of the Baptists, all members of Pedobaptist Churches, and have every inducement to make the best showing that they can for the practice of their own communion. They are therefore most unexceptionable witnesses so far as they may be suspected of any secret bias to one side or the other of this controversy. They are certainly competent to testify, having made the customs of the ancient Church their special study; and they testify most unmistakably that what I said was true; namely, that baptism which Christ commanded to be given only to the believing penitent, that is, to him who gave evidence of a renewal of his nature by the obedience of faith, was first given to the youth upon the repetition of a form of words which they had *learned* as catechumens; and at length to those who could not say the words, but whose parents or others answered for them; and now, as we have often seen, it is given to little crying babes who do not know their right hand from their left. We have seen *when* infant baptism was introduced, *why* it was introduced, and *how* it was introduced;* and I trust you are ready now to go on with our investigation of the claims of the English or Episcopal Church."

"I am quite ready," said the Doctor. "I shall not be troubled any more with doubts about the time of the introduction of infant baptism. I used to think that Dr. Barlow, an eminent Episcopalian, and Professor in the University at Oxford, England, spoke very strangely for one who belonged to a Pedobaptist Church; but I see now, that as a diligent student of antiquity, and a candid man, he could not have spoken otherwise."

* The reader is referred for additional information upon this subject to pages 319-340, vol. i.

“What did he say, sir?” asked Theodosia.

“It was in a letter of his, published in England, in which he says, ‘I do believe and know that there is neither precept nor example in Scripture for infant baptism, nor any just evidence for it for above two hundred years after Christ; that Tertullian condemns it as an unwarrantable custom, and Nazianzen, a good while after him, dislikes it too. Sure I am, that in the primitive times they were first CATECHUMENI, then *Illuminati*, or BAPTIZATI; and that not only Pagans, and the children of Pagans converted, but children of Christian parents. The truth is, I do believe Pedobaptism, how or by whom I know not, came into the world in the second century, and in the third and fourth began to be practiced, though not generally defended as lawful, from the text John iii. 5, grossly misunderstood; and upon the like gross mistake of John vi. 53, they did for many centuries, both in the Greek and Latin Churches, communicate infants, and give them the Lord’s Supper; and I do confess they might do both as well as either.’”

“The whole history is told,” said Mr. Courtney, “in a few words by the learned Johannes Bohemius, who wrote in the twelfth century. ‘In times past,’ he says, ‘the custom was, to administer baptism only to those who had been instructed in the faith, and seven times in the week before Easter and Pentecost catechized. But *afterwards*, when it was thought and adjudged needful to eternal life to be baptized, it was ordained that *new-born children* should be baptized, and godfathers were appointed, who should make confession and renounce the Devil on their behalf.’ But enough of this—perhaps too much, as it has turned our minds away, for the time being, from the main object of our conversation. Let us now proceed to look for our scriptural marks of a true Church of Christ in the English Episcopal Church. Let us have the tablet, Mrs. Percy. What is the first mark?”

"She must consist only of professed believers in Christ."

"Is this true of the English Church? Does not her membership embrace the little children who *cannot* believe, and thousands who were made nominal Christians in their infancy, and who make no pretension to genuine piety? Does it not embrace the gamblers and horse-racers, the profane, the lewd and debauched? Does it not, so far as they can be brought into it, embrace the *whole* population, good, bad, and indifferent, of the great English *nation*? It is the custom, sanctioned by law, that every infant must be baptized. By baptism it is made a member of the Church. The confirmation which follows, when it has come to the age of childhood, and is able, though not very intelligently, to answer for itself, is not the act of admission: it only *confirms* what was already done. The liturgy regards the child as regenerated and made a member of Christ's body by the *act of baptism*. This is the door of entrance into the Church; and, consequently, all who are baptized by her authority are members of her communion."

"But, my dear sir," asked the Doctor, "is not the confirmation necessary to *complete* and ratify the act of admission? I do not think any are *recognized* and *treated as Church members*, who do not at confirmation make a sort of profession of their faith. They must say the catechism and repeat the *creed* before they can be entitled to the privileges of full communion."

"Let it be so; but is this an intelligent and personal profession of that *saving faith* in Christ which is required by the Scripture? Every one who has any familiarity with this confirmation ceremony, knows that the repetition of the catechism and creed is, in most cases, a mere formal saying over of the words. It means nothing more than that the child has been so far instructed that he has committed it to memory, and can say it over as he would a lesson in geography, or a *rule* in arithmetic. He is admitted to communion, not because

he gives to the Church or to the bishop any evidence at all that he is a *penitent believer* in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of his soul, but because he gives evidence that he has intellect enough to learn the catechism, and memorize the creed. This is enough, and this is all. If it sometimes happens that the child has really been converted, and in his mind and heart attaches some spiritual meaning to the words repeated, this is the exception and not the rule. It is not required—it is not expected; and the membership exists, and is just as readily confirmed, without as with it. That there are some, nay, many, very good and pious people in the English Church, I will not deny. They have truly repented of their sins, and have heartily trusted in Christ as their Saviour. They have been born again, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. But at the same time it is notorious that a majority of those she counts as members, make no pretensions to any other Christianity than that which they received by the forms of the Church; and to the efficacy of these forms they are trusting for salvation. If a profession made not *by* them, but *for* them, in infancy, and by them acknowledged and ratified in early childhood, not heartily, and with a full understanding of its import, but in words only, and as a regular matter of form—a mere ceremony which they read in a book, and which is required and expected to be observed at a certain age, and that whether there is any evidence of piety or not—if this is a genuine scriptural profession of faith in Christ, then they have made such profession; if not, then Mr. Percy must make the space opposite this mark in his tablet black, as he did for Rome.”

“It certainly cannot be left white,” said Mr. Percy; “and yet, when I see so many pious believers in Jesus among their members, I do not like to make it entirely black. Suppose we shade it, and leave it neither white nor black?”

“Do not forget the *true point* of our inquiry,” replied Mr

Courtney "It is not whether she has believers *among her members*—Rome has had many thousands—but whether a genuine and scriptural profession of faith is, according to her acknowledged standards, *a prerequisite for membership*; or whether she admits them *without* such profession, and, in fact, before they are competent either to have or to profess a sincere and personal faith in the Redeemer.

"Now, if you have any sort of doubt that *little infants are by baptism* made members of this Church, you can easily dispel it by turning to the baptismal service in her liturgy: 'The minister,' you may read there, 'shall take the child in his arms, and, after naming it, shall dip it discreetly in the water, or shall pour upon it, saying, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." Then the minister shall say, "*We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock*, and do sign him with the sign of the cross,"' etc. Now, is this congregation of Christ's flock the Episcopal Church? Certainly; for the minister is to go on and say, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the *body of Christ's Church*, let us give thanks,' etc. But if this leave any doubt, read on: 'Then shall the minister say, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit; receive him for thy own child by adoption, and *incorporate him into thy holy Church*.'" If the infant, therefore, is not a real Church member, the minister is instructed to say what is not true.

"See also the form of a certificate of baptism, under the head of 'Private Baptism of Children:' 'I certify you that in this case all is well done, and according to due order, concerning the baptizing of this child, *who is now*, BY BAPTISM, *incorporated into the Christian Church*.'

"And now, to assure yourself that it is not *faith* or peni

tence that qualifies for confirmation, and, consequently, for all the privileges of full communicants, turn to the note at the end of the little catechism, before the 'Order of Confirmation,' and you may read as follows :

" 'So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten commandments, and can answer to the other questions of this short catechism, they shall be brought to the bishop for confirmation.'

"The English Church, and that of Rome, stand on the same ground. They both admit infants to Church-membership by baptism ; and both pretend that they are by this baptism regenerated and made members of Christ. It is *by baptism* in both that men are born again ; and this is given, not on any evidence of faith in them, but solely on the promise of the sponsors, or godfathers

"Give us the second mark, if you please, Mrs. Percy."

"It is that the members must have been *baptized* upon profession of their faith."

"The question for us, then, is whether the English Church has in herself, and confers upon her members, genuine Scripture baptism ? We Baptists will say, of course, that she has not ; for we do not recognize the *baptism of infants* as authorized by Scripture ; nor do we admit that sprinkling, or pouring, which is now generally practiced in the Episcopal Church, is baptism at all. But as we have not time to go over the facts and arguments on which we have based our opinions, it will be enough for us to show, by the testimony of the *Episcopalians themselves*, that they *have changed* Christ's ordinance, both in the act and the subjects of it ; and, consequently, that what they now perform as baptism is, according to *their own showing*, NOT the baptism of the Scriptures, but a ceremony which was substituted for it by mere human authority.

“ But, first, I would remark, that when we were examining the record upon this point, we ascertained that those who came into the apostolic Churches *believed*, and were *then* baptized. They were not first baptized, and left to find their faith in after life. Now, as in this Church the pretended baptism is given before there is or can be any faith, this fact alone vitiates the whole, and renders it no true scriptural baptism. And, therefore, if the Church of England had continued to practice *immersion*, as the Greek Church has done, it would not have been true baptism when applied to little babes. But they have changed the *act* as well as the subjects. This I will prove to you by their own plain and express declarations. Hear what the learned Dr. Wall says, in his famous History of Infant Baptism, page 462, speaking of the primitive Christians: ‘ Their general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant or a grown man or woman, into the water. This is so plain and clear, by an infinite number of passages, that one cannot but pity the weak endeavors of such Pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it. . . . It is a great want of prudence, as well as of honesty, to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true and may be proved so. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says . . . It is plain that the ordinary and general practice of St. John, the apostles, and primitive Church, was to baptize by putting the person into the water, or causing him to go into the water. Neither do I know of any *Protestant* who has denied it.’

“ Hear what Bishop Nicholson says :

“ ‘ The sacrament of baptism was anciently administered by plunging into the water, in the western as well as the eastern part of the Church.

“ So *Archbishop Secker* : ‘ Burying, as it were the person

baptized in the water, and raising him out again, without question was anciently the more usual method.'

"So *Bishop Davenant*: 'In the ancient Church, they did not merely sprinkle, but immersed those whom they baptized.'

"And *Bishop Patrick*: 'They [the primitive Christians] put off their old clothes and stripped themselves of their garments; then they were immersed all over and buried in the water.'

"In accordance with this, Mr. Stackhouse declares that 'Several authors have shown that we nowhere read in Scripture of any one being baptized but by immersion; and from the acts of ancient councils and ancient rituals, have proved that this manner of baptizing continued (as much as possible) to be used for thirteen hundred years after Christ. But it is much to be questioned whether the prevalence of custom and the over-fondness of parents will, in these cold countries, ever suffer it to be restored.'

"So *Bishop Taylor* says, expressly, 'The custom of the ancient Church was not sprinkling, but immersion, in pursuance of the meaning of the word in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour.'

And *Archbishop Tillotson* says, that 'Anciently, those that were baptized put off their garments, which signified the putting off the body of sin, and were immersed and buried in the water, to represent their death to sin; and then did rise up again out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life.'

"Now, if the original practice was immersion, as these doctors, and bishops, and archbishops declare, and sprinkling has now come in its place, it is self-evident that, by some authority, the ordinance of Christ has been displaced, and another action substituted for that which he enjoined. But, lest any one may doubt the authority of these dignitaries of the Church—for some people will, now-a-days, doubt almost any thing which goes to show that sprinkling was not the baptism enjoined by Christ and practiced by the apostolic Churches—

will show you that the English Church herself practiced immersion, and immersion only, until comparatively a very recent day. In a catechism, published in the name of King Edward VI., shortly after the separation of the English from the Church of Rome, are the following question and answer :

“ ‘ MASTER. Tell me, my sonne, how these two sacraments be ministred : baptisme and that whyche Paule calleth the Supper of the Lord ?

“ ‘ SCHOLER. Hym that beleueth in Christ, professeth the articles of the Christian religion, and mindeth to be baptized (I speake now of thè that be growè to ripe yeres of discretion : sith for the yòg babes, theyr parentes’ or the Church’s professiò sufficeth) the minister *dyppeth* in, or washeth with pure, clean water only, in the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the Holy Ghost,’ etc.

“ In a sermon by Archbishop Cranmer, a little before this time, the following passage occurs : ‘ What greater shame can there be, than a man who professeth himself to be a Christian man because he is baptized ; and yet he knoweth not what baptism is, nor what strength the same hath, nor what the *dypping* in the water doth betoken. . . . Baptism, and the *dypping in the water*, doth betoken that the old Adam, with all his synne and evel lusts, ought to be *drowned* and killed by daily contrition and repentance.’

“ In like manner William Tyndale speaks of baptism : ‘ The *plungynge* into the water sygnifieth that we dye and are buried with Christ, as concernynge the old life of sinne, which is Adam ; and the *pullynge out agayne* signifieth that we *ryse* agayne with Christ in a new lyfe ’—(*Robison*, p. 430.)

“ But why go to the early days of the English Church, when the very words of her Liturgy, even in modern times, expressly require dipping, except in case the subject be too feeble to endure it. Archbishop Usher says, ‘ Some there are that stand strictly for the particular action of diving or dipping the bap-

tized under water, as the only action which the institution of the sacrament will bear; *and our Church allows no other except in case of the child's weakness; and there is expressed in our Saviour's baptism both the descending into the water and the raising up.*' So the famous George Whitefield says 'It is certain, in the words of our text, (Rom. vi. 3, 4,) there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion, *which our own Church allows, and insists upon it that children should be immersed in water, unless those that bring the children to be baptized assure the minister that they cannot bear plunging.*' Thus Mr. Wesley says on one occasion that he baptized a certain individual by immersion, according to the custom of the first Church and the Church of England. And on another occasion says, he refused to baptize a child unless it could be done by immersion, according to the Book of Common Prayer, or unless the parents would certify it to be weakly.

"It is evident, therefore, that immersion was not merely the ordinance established by Christ, and practiced by the first Churches, but it was recognized and practiced by the Church of England as her ordinary baptism, even towards the close of the last century. And Dr. Whitby, of that Church, says expressly, that 'Immersion was observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries, and approved by our Church, (the Episcopal;) and as the *change of it into sprinkling* was made without any allowance from the Author of the institution, or any license from any council of the Church, it were to be wished that this custom might be again of general use, etc.'—Now if these things be so, is it not as evident as any thing can be, that just to that extent to which they have left off immersion, they have ceased to baptize? and that, according to the confessions and declarations which they themselves have made? They lack, therefore, the second mark of a true Church, **which we discovered in the Word**

“Let us now look for the third: Is it a local congregation, or is it, like the Roman Church, a centralized hierarchy? We need spend no time to determine this. The structure and constitutions of the two establishments are very similar, if not identical, except that one recognizes the sovereign of England as its visible head, and the other the Pope of Rome. No local congregation of the English Church is of itself an independent church. It only makes a *part* of the great confederacy called THE CHURCH; and as our Scripture Churches were each one *independent*, and did *not* make a part of any such confederacy, but was complete within itself, so we may know from this circumstance alone that this is not the scriptural Church.

“Our next mark will demand a little more particular attention. Does the Church of England take Christ *alone* for her King and Lawgiver? or does she recognize the authority of the King or Queen and Parliament to legislate for her in matters pertaining to religion? I speak now of the Episcopal Church *in England*, for that in this country stands upon somewhat different ground. The English Church grew out of the Roman Catholic, as we shall see hereafter, in the time of Henry the Eighth; and one of those enactments by which it was established, declares that ‘Archbishops and bishops, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by and under the King’s majesty, the only undoubted Head of the Church of England, to whom by the Holy Scripture power and authority is given to hear and determine all manner of causes whatsoever, and to correct all sin and vice whatsoever.’

“In the time of King Edward VI., it was further enacted, that ‘Whosoever should affirm by open preaching, express words or sayings, that the King is *not*, or that any other is the Supreme Head of the Church of England, should for the first offence forfeit goods and chattels, with imprisonment at the king’s will, for the second forfeit profit of lands; and for the

third suffer as in cases of high treason.' It was under *such* laws as these that the Church of England was organized.

"I cannot give you a better account of the results than has been given by Macaulay, himself a Churchman, in his History of England. 'Henry the Eighth,' he says, (p. 38, vol. i.,) 'attempted to constitute an Anglican Church differing from the Roman Catholic Church on the point of supremacy, and on that point alone. His success in this attempt was extraordinary. The force of his character, the singularly favorable situation in which he stood with respect to foreign powers, the immense wealth which the spoliation of the abbeys placed at his disposal, and the support of that class which still halted between two opinions, enabled him to bid defiance to both the extreme parties, to burn as heretics those who avowed the tenets of Luther, and to hang as traitors those who owned the authority of the Pope. But Henry's system died with him. . . . The ministers who held the royal prerogative in trust for his infant son, could not venture to persist in so hazardous a policy, nor could Elizabeth venture to return to it. It was necessary to make a choice. The government must either submit to Rome, or obtain the aid of the Protestants. The government and the Protestants had only one thing in common—hatred of the Papal power. . . . But as the government needed the support of the Protestants, so the Protestants needed the protection of the government. Much was therefore given up on both sides. A union was effected, and the fruit of that union was the Church of England. . . . To this day the constitution, the doctrines, and the services of the Church retain the visible marks of the compromise from which she sprung. . . . Nothing, however, so strongly distinguished the Church of England from other Churches, as the relation in which she stood to the monarchy. *The King was her Head.* . . . What Henry and his favorite counsellors meant by the supremacy was certainly nothing less than the

whole power of the keys. The king was to be the Pope of his kingdom, the vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic verity, the channel of sacramental graces. . . . The king (such was the opinion of Cranmer given in the plainest words) might, by authority derived from God, make a priest, and the priest so made needed no ordination whatever. . . . These high pretensions gave scandal to Protestants as well as Catholics; and the scandal was greatly increased when the supremacy which Mary had resigned back to the Pope, was again annexed to the *Crown* on the accession of Elizabeth. It seemed monstrous that a *woman* should be the chief bishop of a Church in which an apostle had forbidden her even to let her voice be heard. . . . When the Anglican Confession of Faith was revised in her reign, the supremacy was explained in a manner somewhat different from that which had been fashionable in the Court of Henry the Eighth. . . . The queen, however, still had over the Church a visitorial power of vast and undefined extent. She was intrusted by parliament with the office of restraining and punishing heresy, and every sort of ecclesiastical abuse; (so all the *discipline* of its membership was placed in the hands of the Crown;) 'and was permitted to delegate her authority to commissioners. The bishops were little more than her ministers. Rather than grant to the civil magistrate the absolute power of nominating spiritual pastors, the Church of Rome, in the eleventh century, set all Europe on fire; rather than grant to the civil magistrate the absolute power of nominating spiritual pastors, the ministers of the Church of Scotland, in our own time, resigned their livings by hundreds. The Church of England had no such scruples. By the royal authority alone, her prelates were appointed. By the royal authority alone, her convocations were summoned, regulated, prorogued, and dissolved. Without the royal sanction her canons had no force. One of the articles of her faith was that, without the royal consent, no ecclesiastical council could lawfully

assemble From all her judicatures an appeal lay in the last resort to the sovereign, even when the question was whether an opinion was heretical, or whether the administration of a sacrament had been valid.'

"Such is the account which this learned son of the Church gives of her constitution. And if such a Church has Christ *alone* for her King and Lawgiver, there is no means of subjecting a Church to any secular or religious power. Look at it a moment. No one can be a minister within her borders who has not been ordained by a *prelate*. Yet the *prelate* is the absolute creature of the crown. The crown, therefore, by making the prelate, makes the whole ministry of the Church. The whole *discipline* of the Church is in the crown. The queen says, by her commissioners, who are to be admitted as Church-members, and who excluded; who retained and who expelled; who shall be censured and who commended. And, in case even these, her own commissioners, do not decide to please her, there is, in the last resort, an appeal to herself. So that the queen has power to decide who shall and who shall not be members of the Church. The queen decides what is gospel truth, and what is heretical; what must be believed and what must be practiced. For, without the royal consent, the decisions of the Church can have no force."

"That seems all very true," replied the Doctor. "But you will recollect that this is the *mere theory* of the Church, under which she went into operation in the troublous times that gave her birth. It does not follow that the powers of the queen are *now* what they were then; that Queen Victoria has the same ecclesiastical prerogatives which belonged to Queen Elizabeth."

"What if she has *not*?" replied Mr. Courtney. "The Church which *once* gave up her sovereignty, and consented to be subject in matters of religion to another lord than Christ,

did, by that act, cease to be a Church of Christ, and lose the authority to act as his executive. But your surmise has no foundation in truth. This is not merely the ancient theory, but the modern practice. The authority of the crown determines, to-day, the forms of prayer, the ritual of baptism, the times of worship, and all else pertaining to the English Church, as truly as it did in the days of Elizabeth. When Mr. Seabury went to England to procure ordination as a bishop, there was no Church or council of Churches, no bishop or house of bishops, that dared to confer ordination on him, or *could*, according to the *law* of the Church, have conferred it, until an *act* of parliament had been passed, and received the royal signature, *permitting* it to be done. Not only Seabury, but all the bishops of America, hold their commission by virtue of a *special* act of parliament; and not only they, but all who shall be by them ordained to the ministry, are by that act expressly prohibited from exercising their ministry in England.

"But we have been speaking of the Church of England as a whole; of the *hierarchy*, which comprises all the local societies in one great body. The Churches of Christ, however, we have before determined, are the *local* societies; and the true question before us is simply whether each one of the local organizations, commonly called Episcopal Churches, is subject, in matters belonging to religion, to any lord but Christ. If you look at it in this light, you will see that an Episcopal Church is subject to the priest; it is subject to the bishop; it is subject to councils; and in fact, it has *no* voice in its own government. It is ruled from without, and has nothing to do but inquire the decrees of its lords and humbly to obey them. If it refuse to carry into execution their enactments, it cannot continue an Episcopal Church."

"But tell me," asked Theodosia, "does the Episcopal Church in this country stand on the same ground?"

"It *claims* to be a part of the same Church. So far as practicable, it is constituted on the same plan. It is not, however, dependent on the will of the queen or the acts of parliament, but on the decrees of its general councils. If, however, the *mother*, in England, was not a true Church when she gave it birth, it cannot be a true Church; for it has nothing which it did not receive from her. Moreover, each local society in America is just as much *subject* to its priest and bishop, and just as much bound by the ecclesiastical laws concocted for it and imposed upon it, as any local English Church."

"Let us pass on," said the Doctor. "I am anxious to see the end. What was our next mark?"

"It was," said Mr. Percy, "that its members must have been made such by their own voluntary act; and we have seen already that the members of this Church were made such in infancy, without their own knowledge or consent."

"Let us then go on to the next."

"That," said Mr. Percy, "has regard to her faith. Does she hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel? It is well known that both in this country and in England she is divided into two great parties; one trusting as much as Rome herself to the efficacy of sacraments, and forms, and works; and the other recognizing salvation by Jesus only. I am disposed to mark her half black, therefore, to designate the High Church, or sacramental party; and half white, to designate the other, or Evangelical party."

It may have been observed by the attentive reader that neither the Episcopal bishop nor the Methodist preacher have taken any part in this morning's discussion. The truth is, they were not present; and the interest of the passengers had in a great degree subsided; so that our little company had the conversation all to themselves. They had been themselves so much engaged that they had scarcely observed the

absence of their friendly adversaries, until they came to the seventh of those marks, which they had gathered out of the Book, and by which a true Church might be known.

But when the question was asked whether this Church began with Christ, and had continued ever since, they very naturally looked round for the Bishop, at whose instigation it had been added to the tablet; and, on finding that he was not present, they concluded to postpone their investigation until another day.

THE EIGHTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

WHEN our little company assembled the next morning they learned that they were within an hour's sail of Nashville. They had therefore no time to talk, but each one began to make preparation to leave the boat. Mr. Courtney made inquiry for the Episcopal bishop and the Methodist minister, that he might bid them a kind adieu; but learned that they had taken another boat, or gone ashore at the mouth of the Cumberland. The Doctor insisted that Theodosia, Mr. Percy, and Mr. Courtney, should make his house their home for a few days, at least, until they should have finished this discussion. And in some three hours after they had landed, they were sitting round a table in Doctor Thinkwell's dining room.

After dinner, when the Doctor had finished his cigar, he came into the parlor, where his guests were talking, and exclaimed, "Come, Mr. Courtney, we have no time to lose: I am anxious to have this question, what is the Church, or rather, *which* is the Church, settled as soon as possible. Let us resume our conversations here, and progress to a conclusion; I am impatient to see the end. Perhaps Mrs. Percy will consent with us into the library, where we will be less liable to interruption and have readier access to such books as we may wish to consult."

The arrangements were made at once, and the investigation resumed where it was left off upon the boat.

"We were, I think," said the Doctor, "engaged in apply-

ing our tests, or marks, to the English Episcopal Church, and had progressed as far as the seventh sign. We had just inquired whether the English Church had been established by Christ, and had continued from his day until now?"

"It surely needs no time to answer that," said Mr. Percy "after what we have already seen to be the testimony of Macaulay, the historian; for he says expressly, that 'it was the result of a compromise between the government on the one hand and the Protestants on the other.' It cannot date farther back than King Henry VIII."

"But I presume you are aware, Mr. Percy," replied the Doctor, "that some of our clergy have contended that the true Anglican Church began in the time of the apostles, and has continued ever since, independent of Rome, except so far as it was for a time brought into unwilling subjection, previous to the Reformation. It is said that Christianity was brought into the island by Paul, and thousands of Churches existed both in England and Wales before the Saxon conquest; and when the Saxons re-introduced idolatry, Christianity retired to the fastnesses of the forests and mountains; and it was through *these*, and not through Rome, that our descent has come."

"I suppose," replied Mr. Percy, "that it is much easier to claim and contend for such a pedigree than to establish it. But let us see the proofs. We know what the English Episcopal Church is *now*. The question is, When did it become what it now is? And who made it such? Macaulay and other secular historians say with one voice, it was Henry the Eighth and his successors on the throne of England. But theologians who see that this would be fatal to their claims to be a scriptural Church, declare that history is mistaken. Let us then examine for ourselves. It is a *hierarchy* which has for its *head* the person who wears the English crown. This is its peculiar feature. Take this away, and it is not the English Episcopal Church. It has been, in this respect, what it is

now, ever since Henry the Eighth. What was it before that time? Was it not the *same* people, the *same* priests, the *same* bishops, and the *same* archbishops which then began to recognize King Henry as the head of the Church, who had previous to that time recognized the *Pope* as their sovereign lord in all matters of religion? Was it not that part of the Church of Rome which was in England which then, by the decree of the king and his parliament, was made the Church of England? They must be simpletons indeed who believe that the Church of King Henry, and his successors in the headship, was the ancient English Church which Austin, about the year six hundred, sought in vain to persuade to 'give baptism to their children.' Did King Henry call *those* people from their hiding-places in the mountains of Wales, and seek to *them* for the ordination and ordinances of Christ which Rome, as Antichrist, could not confer? No conscientious historian will dare to intimate any such thing. Those who make such statements make them to deceive. They know that he did nothing of the sort. They know that if the members and ministers of that old Church were yet in being, (and I do not question that they were,) King Henry had no use for them. No more did his successors. Both he and they continued to *hang* them, and *drown* them, and *burn* them, (as the Popes had done before,) even down to the time when Cromwell subverted his throne. That ancient Church, if I have read its history rightly, was a *Baptist* Church; or at least it was a Church that did not baptize except upon a profession of faith, and would not submit to be controlled in matters of religion by any lord but Christ."

"It is a matter of no consequence at all to our present argument," said Mr. Courtney, "whether the modern Church of England came out of Rome, or out of some ancient Church planted upon her native soil by Paul himself; for whatever *her origin* might have been, she could not at any time have *been what she is now*, and at the same time a true Church of

Christ Whenever she became a hierarchy, and owned the rule of *any* lord but Christ, whether that lord were the Pope of Rome, the King of England, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, is of no consequence at all ; from that moment she ceased to be the true Church of Jesus Christ ; for *his* Church was, and must continue to be, an *independent local organization*, not a confederacy ; not a hierarchy ; not any great ecclesiastical establishment. Christ established *no such Church*. The apostles established *no such Church*, either in England or anywhere else. If Paul built up a Church in England, (of which there is no proof but loose tradition,) it was like the other Churches which he founded, an independent local society ; and if he established more than one, as he did in Greece, then *each one* was independent. And if any one usurped the power over others, or if any one yielded subjection to any other, whether that at Rome, or at Bangor, it ceased from that time forth to be a Church of Christ ; for Christ was then no longer its *only King and Lawgiver*. Now, that the English Church *has ceased some time or other* to be the independent body which Christ enjoined, is certain ; and it will not at all affect our argument whether she did so at, before, or since the time of Henry the Eighth."

"But yet," said Theodosia, "it would be very interesting to know the history of the Churches which were first established in England, and which must have been true Churches, if they dated near the times of the apostles. It may be they yet exist as independent bodies, and have *always* refused subjection alike to the Pope of Rome and the hierarchy of which the crown has now become the head."

"Your conjecture is but the truth of their history, Mrs. Percy. They *do* yet exist. They *have* resisted, even unto death, all efforts to subject them to the Pope of Rome, or to the hierarchy of England. Their history was written in the blood of their martyrs, shed by those who, in former days, con

trolled the records and wielded the power of the country, and who were greatly desirous that it should be blotted out. We must therefore trace them mainly now in those brief allusions to their existence which the narration of other events made needful, and in the decrees which were designed for their destruction. Yet we will find no insuperable difficulty in tracing a true and pure Church of Christ in England, or at least in Wales, from the time that Christianity was first established on the island. This I trust we will be permitted to do before we close this investigation; but let us now not wander from the matter before us. This Church you may be sure was not the modern Church of England. That began with Henry the Eighth, according to the testimony of Macaulay and others of its own historians. But we can still trace the persecuted followers of Jesus by the blood of their martyrs, until the Reformation, and long after it. The first and the last whose blood was shed for their religion in England, were Baptists. They were never amalgamated with and never subjected to the hierarchy of the Pope, or of the King; and to this day maintain their ancient baptism, and their independent organization in the mountains of Wales, whence many have come, both ministers and members, to our own beloved land, and have aided us to build up Churches like their own, after the model at Jerusalem. But we will be obliged to go back to this subject. Let us now hasten on. What is your next mark, Mrs. Percy?"

"It is, that *No true Church can be a persecuting Church.*"

"Then surely the English Church cannot be true; for though she has not been, like Rome, at all times a perpetual and relentless persecutor, yet her hands are red with the blood of more than one of the followers of Jesus. Henry the Eighth laid the very foundation of the Church in blood. He, as head of the Church, persecuted and destroyed both Papists and Protestants: the Papists because they preferred the Pope to the

King, and the Protestants because they could not receive *his Church*, which contained the whole of Popery except the Pope.

“Edward the Sixth, the youthful and amiable successor of Henry as the head of the Church, would gladly have been delivered from the necessity of killing his best subjects because they could not think about religion as his bishops did; but he was urged and goaded by the clergy into the condemnation and execution even of tender women, whose only crime was nonconformity to the Church of England. Cranmer, the archbishop, had great difficulty in overcoming his natural kindness of heart, and inducing him to sign the warrant for their death by *burning*; but he did succeed, and it was done.”

“Surely,” exclaimed Theodosia, “you do not mean to say that Archbishop Cranmer, the martyr, had been himself the means of bringing others to the flames! I have always thought he was one of the best and holiest of men. I remember there was in the catechism I used to study, a picture of him as he stood at the stake, holding out his right hand in the fire to punish it for signing his recantation.”

“Yes, Mrs. Percy, I mean to say that Cranmer was a murderer and a persecutor. So also was in heart that other saint of whom you had a picture in your catechism, representing *John Rogers* at the stake, surrounded by his wife and nine little children, one yet a nursing babe. John Rogers was so far a persecutor, that when he was solicited to ask for pardon, or at least some milder mode of death, for a woman condemned to the flames, he obstinately refused to say one word in her behalf.”

“I must believe you, Mr. Courtney; but still it seems to me almost incredible.”

“I grant, madam, that it is almost incredible; but I will show you such authorities that you shall be convinced that Rome herself, even in her worst estate, was never a bitterer

or bloodier persecutor for conscience' sake, than was this new-made Church of England. Look at Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 112. See also Strype's Ecclesiastical Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 214; or Neals History of the Puritans; or Ivimey's History of Baptism, pages 88-90. In the year 1549, a commission was given to Archbishop Cranmer and several others, by the King as the HEAD of *this* so called CHURCH of the gentle and loving Jesus, to 'search after all Anabaptists, (the same people now called Baptists,) all heretics and contemnners of their Book of Common Prayer, and, if they would not be reclaimed, to excommunicate, imprison, and deliver them over to death.' There was a Baptist woman, Mrs. Joan Boucher, sometimes called Joan of Kent, of whom Strype says, 'She was a great reader of the Scriptures,' and who risked her life to circulate the Scriptures among the ladies at court. She could not conform to all that the bishops taught, and was therefore arrested and condemned. When the young king refused to sign her death-warrant, Cranmer urged him, with great earnestness, to authorize her execution. The king could not answer the arguments of the learned prelate, and knew not how to resist his importunity. He signed the warrant, but did it with tears in his eyes, and protesting that he did it *only on the authority of the Archbishop*, who had declared that God required it; and said, if it should be wrong, that 'he (the prelate) should answer for the sin in the great day of judgment.' The bishop took the warrant, and thus said, 'Her blood be upon my soul.' Now in Fox's Latin edition of the Book of Martyrs are a few sentences which the English has omitted, and which are thus translated by Mr Pierce in his answer to Nichols, p. 33:—'In King Edward's reign some were put to death for heresy. One of these was Joan Boucher, or Joan of Kent. Now, says Mr. Fox, when the Protestant bishops had resolved to put her to death, a friend of Mr. John Rogers, the divinity-reader in Saint Paul's

Church, came to him, earnestly desiring him to use his influence with the archbishop that the poor woman's life might be spared, and other means used to prevent the spreading of her opinion, which might be done in time; saying too, that though while she lived she infected few with her opinion, yet she might bring many to think well of it by suffering death for it. He pleaded, therefore, that it was better she should be kept in some prison, without an opportunity of propagating her notions among weak people; and she would do no harm to others, and might live to repent herself. Rogers, on the other hand, pleaded that *she ought to be put to death*. "Well then," saith his friend, "if you are resolved to put an end to her life, together with her opinion, choose some other kind of death, more agreeable to the gentleness and mercy prescribed by the gospel; there being no need that such tormenting deaths should be taken up in imitation of the Papists."

"Rogers answered, *that burning alive was no cruel death, but easy enough*. His friend hearing these words, which expressed so little regard to poor creatures' suffering, answered him with great vehemence, and striking Rogers's hand, which before he had held fast, said to him, "*Well, perhaps it may so happen that you yourselves shall have your hands full of this mild burning.*" And so it came to pass. Mr. Rogers was the first man who was burned in Queen Mary's reign. I am apt to think,' adds Mr. Pierce, 'that Mr. Rogers's friend was no other than Fox himself.'—(*Crosby*, vol. i., p. 61. *Ivimey*, p. 92.)

"In the few remaining years of Edward's life, and while the religion of the realm was under the control of Cranmer, many other persons were burnt at the stake for their religious sentiments. After the king's death, the Catholics had the supremacy for a little season, under the reign of her whom historians have been pleased to call the Bloody Mary, because

she killed the Protestants for the same reasons that *they* had killed the *Baptists*, and other so-called heretics.

"When Elizabeth came to the throne, the Baptists expected toleration, and began openly to avow their sentiments. But they were fearfully mistaken. They were burnt with just as little pity as the Catholics themselves had ever shown. 'Indeed,' says Neal, 'more sanguinary laws were made in her reign than in those of her predecessors. Her hands were stained with the blood of both Papists and Puritans: the former were executed for denying her supremacy; the latter for sedition and *nonconformity*.' Nor did the persecution cease when Elizabeth had gone to her account, and James became the head of the Church. It was continued after James had died, and his unfortunate successor, Charles I., had come to the headship of the Church. Fines and imprisonments, whipping and mutilating, branding, torturing, and tormenting the saints of God, who held the authority of the Sacred Word to be above the dicta of the bishops, were not only inflicted by the laws, but earnestly *urged* upon the magistrates by the synods of the Church. (*See the Constitutions and Canons of 1640.*) But we have enough of this.

"He who would deny that the English Episcopal Church was a persecuting Church, would deny that Rome herself ever persecuted for conscience' sake. Not only is the testimony rife in *English history*, across the water, but the men are living yet, *among ourselves*, whose ancestors in *this country* were, *by the English Church laws*, condemned to fines and imprisonments, if not to death. The jails are standing yet in which they were confined. The iron bars are yet in place through which the Baptist ministers of Virginia preached to their people, while Virginia was subject to the head of the Episcopal Church. Now, let me say one word, and I have done with this disagreeable subject: *When the Church of*

England became a persecutor for conscience' sake, she CEASED TO BE A CHURCH OF CHRIST, even on the supposition that she had been one before that time. So, whether you derive her from Rome, her persecuting mother, or whether you try to trace her origin to the Apostle Paul, through the ancient English Churches, is of no consequence at all. She lost her authority to act as Christ's executive (if she ever had it) when she began to shed the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Trace your succession of Christian Churches downwards from Christ; or trace it upwards towards Christ; but, either way, it cannot cross that stream of blood which flows out from the hearts of the martyrs of Jesus. Every link of the chain of succession may be perfect, from Paul down to the first of the martyrs whose life was taken by the so-called Church, for his religion; but when the executioner lets fall his bloody axe, by Church authority or instigation, the chain is severed for ever. That is no Church of Christ that burns Christ's people at the stake. Those gory hands, which are red with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, cannot confer the sacraments of his Church. Yet the advocates of Episcopacy will have us believe that this is, forsooth, *THE Church*, and out of her there are *no* ordinances and *no* Christian ministry!"

Mr. Courtney spoke with an energy of manner that was quite unusual for him; and when he ceased, there was perfect silence for a little time, till Theodosia, looking at her tablet, remarked that we had only one mark more, which is, that no *apostate* Church can be a Church of Christ.

"If you derive the English Episcopal Church from the ancient British Churches," said Mr. Courtney, "she is *apostate*. She became so when she became a hierarchy, introduced infants as members, united with the state, (thus recognizing another lord than Christ,) and began to persecute for conscience' sake. Any *one* of these innovations on Christ's order would have marked her apostate; and when she became

apostate, she ceased, of course, to be Christ's Church. But it, according to the indisputable truth of history, you derive her from Rome in the age of King Henry VIII., she has *not become* apostate, for *she never was* a true Church of Christ. She had, at first, *no baptism* but that of Antichrist. She had *no ministry* but that ordained by Antichrist; and her *organization* was that of Antichrist. She *began* in lust, and worldliness, and blood. She was from her inception the mere creature of the secular power; and, from the very first, so foul that she *could not apostatize*."

"My dear sir," exclaimed the Doctor, "you must surely speak without thinking of the full import of your words. I grant that the Church of England was not at its inception a perfect Church. It still had some leaven of Romanism; but was certainly a very great improvement on the system which it supplanted, and far from being as vile as it could be."

"By an apostate Church," replied the schoolmaster, "we mean a Church which has once been a true Church of Jesus Christ; but, by a change of constitution, of membership, of doctrine, or of practice, in points essential to its identity with the New Testament model, has *ceased to be* a true Church. It follows, therefore, that if *this Church of England never had* the characteristics of a true Church, she could not lose them, and, consequently, could not apostatize. And this was all I meant to say. But if you imagine that she was at her beginning any better than her mother, of Rome, or in any way different from her as regards the want of the essential features of a Church of Christ, let me tell you that you have entirely misapprehended her character. The only important difference between them was that the pope was the head of the Roman, and the king was the head of the English. The king made laws for the one, as the pope for the other. The king required faith in his dogmas, on pain of death, as much as the pope. The king forbade the people to read the Word

of God as peremptorily as the pope. The king, in short, became the pope of England. And this is what people call the Reformation."

"I am certainly mistaken, if such were really the case; but I suppose you have the proof. I had been under the impression that King Henry authorized and encouraged the reading of the Scriptures; and even required, by his royal authority, that they should be publicly read in the Churches."

"That is true, sir. The king, *at first*, did order a translation to be made; approved it when it was received from Tyndale; and it was 'SET FORTH WITH THE KING'S MOST GRACIOUS LICENSE;' and a decree enacted that it be 'sold and read of every person, without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance, heretofore granted to the contrary.' All the authority and influence of the government *was* earnestly and efficiently employed to secure to the people the opportunity to read the Scriptures and urge them to improve it.

"The king knew that the pope had forbidden the Scriptures to be read, and trusted that, by reading them, his people would learn to fear and hate the pope. But it did not occur to him that they would see that *he* had no more right to rule *the Church* than the pope had. He thought also that he had well secured his people from all danger of heresy, by the law enacted about the same time, 'to establish Christian quietness and unity.'

"The doctrines enjoined by this statute were, 1. Transubstantiation. 2. Communion in both kinds not necessary to salvation. 3. Priests may not marry by the law of God. 4. Vows of celibacy binding. 5. Private masses to be retained. 6. Auricular confession useful and necessary. Its penalties were, for denial of the first article, *death at the stake*, without privilege of abjuration; for the five others, *death as a felon*, or imprisonment during his majesty's pleasure.

"But so soon as the king found that if people read the

Scriptures, they would not, or could not, believe his monstrous doctrines; when he found that hundreds of his most loyal subjects were ready to die at the stake rather than profess to believe them, he suddenly changed his policy. And it was then enacted, 'That all manner of books, of the Old and New Testament, in English, of Tyndale's crafty, false, and untrue translation, [the very same that had been before graciously ordered to be read,] should, by authority of this act, be clearly and utterly abolished and extinguished, and forbidden to be kept and used in this realm, or elsewhere, in any of the king's dominions.'

"And further, 'That no manner of persons, after the first of October, 1543, should take upon them to read openly to others, in any Church or open assembly, within any of the king's dominions, the Bible, or any part of the Scriptures, in English, unless he was so appointed thereto by the king, or any ordinary, on pain of suffering one month's imprisonment.'

"And, to show how little probable it was that the king would appoint any one to read, it was further enacted, 'That no women, except noblewomen and gentlewomen, might read the Bible to themselves alone; and no artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving-men of the degrees of yeomen or husbandmen, or laborers, were to read the Bible or New Testament to themselves, or any other, privately or openly, on pain of one month's imprisonment.'

"And then again, three years after this, 'That, from henceforth, NO MAN, WOMAN, OR PERSON, *of what degree he or they shall be*, shall, after the last day of August next ensuing, receive, have, take, or keep, in his or their possession, the text of the New Testament, of Tyndale's or Coverdale's, *nor any other*, that is permitted by the act of Parliament, holden at Westminster, in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth year of his majesty's most noble reign.'

'These and many other most interesting and significant

facts connected with the introduction of the vernacular Bible in the English nation, you will find in that most admirable work of Mrs. Conant, *The History of English Bible Translation*, pp. 320-325.

“That these laws were designed to be executed, and that they *were* executed, even to the veriest extremity of their bloody requisition, the history of many a murdered lover of the Scriptures will testify. Under this law the Anabaptists were burnt, as testified by Bishop Latimer, in many parts of England; and under it the heroic Anne Askew was first tortured on the rack, and then burned at the stake.

“Now, what I say is this: a Church thus false in doctrine; thus like Antichrist in government; thus devilish in spirit; ordained and established by a wicked king, for worldly purposes, and sustained, from the very first, by outraging, not merely the laws of God, but the dictates of humanity, *could not have been at any time, by any possibility, A TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.* She could not, therefore, *cease* to be a true Church, since she had never been one. She could not apostatize. *Nor can she ever become a true Church* while she remains the Church of England. She may become less vile and abominable than at first. She has indeed grown vastly better than at first. But, since she was not a true Church then, she had no authority to administer the laws or ordinances of Christ. Her baptism was, consequently, no more Christian baptism than is a Mormon immersion; her ordination was no more Christian ordination than if it had been performed by the priests of Jupiter. Christ gave no sort of authority to any such establishment; and all her acts are therefore *null and void*. So far from having the *only* baptism, she has no Christian baptism at all. So far from having the *only* ministry, she has no Christian ministry at all. So far from having the *exclusive* authority to confer the sacraments of Christ’s Church, she has never received them

never has had, has not now, and never can have, the right to confer them at all."

"Surely," said the Doctor, "she may repent and reform, if she has not already done so. How then dare you assert that she can never become a true Church, and have all the rights of any other true Church?"

"My dear Doctor, let us simply use our common sense one minute. We have seen what a true Church is according to the Scriptures. It is a local, independent society, and not a part of a confederacy or a hierarchy. If *this* Church should ever fall back upon the Scripture rule in this respect, she will no longer be the Church of England

"We have seen that a true Church can, *as a Church*, recognize no power to make laws for her but Christ. Now, if this Church deny the power of the king and parliament to determine for her the doctrines that her members shall believe, and her ministers shall teach; what parts of Scripture she shall read on certain days; what words of prayer she shall employ; or that the king, by his chancellors and the bishops, shall have control of her discipline; determine what each member must believe; who shall be received as members, and by what form it shall be done; who shall be excluded, who retained; and, in fact, almost every thing in regard to all that characterizes a Church—I say, if she deny all or any of this, she ceases to be *the Church of England*. We have seen that a true Church consists of those who have first professed their faith, and *then* have been baptized. Let this Church cease to receive any *but believers*, and restore what she herself admits to have been the baptism which Christ ordained, and which was *changed* without authority from him, and she will no longer be *the Church of England*. In short, if she should ever be so far changed as to be conformed in all essential points to the Scripture model, she must first *cease to be*. The king must resign the headship and give it up to

Christ. The bishops and archbishops must leave their Episcopal thrones and become simple pastors of single Churches. The discipline of the Church must revert to the 'ekklesia,' the assembly of the brethren and sisters. And from this assembly those must be excluded who have not come to it *voluntarily*, professed their *faith*, and then received *that* baptism which Christ appointed."

"And if all that is done," said Theodosia, "she will no longer be the English Episcopal Church, for these are her characteristic features. But how is it with the American, or Protestant Episcopal Church?"

"In condemning the mother, we have sentenced the daughter," replied Mr. Courtney. "The Episcopal Church of this country was a *part* of the English so long as it *could* be; and when, by the political separation of the two nations, it became impracticable to retain *all* that belonged to the mother Church, no more was given up than was imperiously demanded by the circumstances. The most important difference is, that as the king or queen could not be here recognized as the head, the bishops have retained the headship in themselves. It cannot here, since the revolution, secure the power of the state to enforce its decrees; and, therefore, it is no longer able to be a persecutor; and probably it has no will to be. But if the mother was (as we have seen) no true Church of Jesus, the daughter cannot be. She received her organization, her ministry, and her ordinances, from the English Church; and if *that* was not the authorized executive of Christ, it had no right to confer either, and its acts are null and void. The bishops of this country were made such, not by the law of Christ, but under a special act of *Parliament*, and their ministrations are limited by this act to the western continent. Their commission does not read, 'Go ye into *all the world*,' but, If you shall keep yourselves in the United States of America, you shall have the right to exercise

the office of a Christian bishop. So the act of Parliament requires. The American Episcopal Church exists, so far as the greater part of its ministry are concerned, by a special act of the British government, passed *after* we had become a free and independent people; and that act confines their ministrations to *this country*, or, at least, forbids them to preach the gospel of salvation in the realms of her majesty the queen. Thus was *Christ's* command, 'Go into all the world,' set aside, and the English king's *permission* humbly sought, and reluctantly granted, to preach in these United States."*

"I am convinced," said the Doctor, "that *this* is not the Church of Christ. But let us hasten on, and find, if possible, what and where it is."










"Wait one minute," said Mr. Percy, "till I have finished my diagram of this claimant, and then I will be ready to look at another."

"Here is the picture, all black but half the space representing the articles of faith."

* The following is a part of the act of Parliament referred to, and under authority of which the three American bishops, White, Madison, and Prevoost were permitted to be consecrated. After making it lawful for the English bishops to proceed with the consecration in a certain way, the act goes on to say, that "No person shall be consecrated bishop in the manner herein provided, until the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Archbishop of York, for the time being, shall have first applied for and obtained his *majesty's license*, by warrant, under his royal signet and sign-manual, empowering him to proceed to such consecration.

"Provided also, and it is hereby declared, that NO PERSON or PERSONS, consecrated to the office of a bishop in the manner aforesaid, nor any person or persons deriving their consecration from or under any bishop so consecrated, nor any person or persons admitted to the order of a deacon or a priest, by any bishop or bishops so consecrated, SHALL BE THEREBY ENABLED TO EXERCISE HIS OR THEIR RESPECTIVE OFFICES WITHIN HIS MAJESTY'S DOMINIONS."—(*Statutes of George III*)

DIAGRAM OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

SIGNS OR MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH.		MARKS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.
1st. It consists only of pro- fessed believers in Christ.		It makes members of children, who do not know their right hand from their left.
2d. Its members have been baptized upon a profes- sion of their faith.		They were <i>sprinkled</i> when they were incapa- ble of believing.
3d. It is a local organiza- tion, and independent of all others.		It is a vast hierarchy, and not a local organiza- tion.
4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no other authority above its own.		It is subject to the king and Parliament in England, and to the bish- ops in this country.
5th. Its members have be- come such by their own voluntary act.		They were made such in childhood, without their knowledge or consent.
6th. It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.		The high-Church party holds to salvation by the efficacy of the sacraments.
7th. It began with Christ, and has continued to the present time.		It began with Henry VIII., or if before his time, it had apostatized.
8th. It never persecutes for conscience' sake.		It was for many years a bloody persecutor.
9th. No apostate Church can be a Church of Christ.		If not apostate itself, it was the creature and off- spring of Antichrist.

"I think," said Mr. Courtney, "you might have left that white; for if we take their published standards, TO WIT, the thirty-nine articles in the Prayer-book, there is not much to object to them."

"But how if they practically repudiate their own professions, and elsewhere teach, and in their hearts believe, that it is by the *sacraments*, and not by faith alone, that men are made the children of God and the heirs of glory? This I understand the high-Church party to have done, and so have marked them black."

"Well, let it stand; we have not time to dispute about it now. Suppose we take up the other branch, or off-shoot, of the English Episcopal Church: TO WIT, the Methodists."

"Very good; this is the natural place for them in our investigation; and after what has been already settled in regard to the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches, we need not spend much time upon their Methodist offspring. Now, if Mrs. Percy will read again the first of the marks of a true Church as they stand upon her tablet, we will apply it to this claimant."

"Is the Methodist Episcopal Church composed exclusively of those who have professed a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"I wish," said Dr. Thinkwell, "that our Methodist minister were here to answer for his Church. I do not like to see her tried without the benefit of counsel."

"Since he is not here," said Theodosia, "let us set their Book of Discipline to answer for them. Mr. Percy has a copy in his trunk, and surely no Methodist, if he were present, would object to the reception of its testimony."

Mr. Percy went for the little book, and on his return opened at the 20th page, and read as follows:

"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the

sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

"It seems, then, from this, their own definition," said Theodosia, "that the Methodist Church must be a simple local congregation of believers, or else it cannot be the visible Church of Christ; and yet it is notorious that the Methodist Church is *not* a mere *congregation* of believers, but that great confederation governed by the Conference. I fear their theory and practice will not correspond."

"Here is something more," said Mr. Percy, "on the 30th page: 'Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized, and shall, on examination by the minister in charge before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.'"

"Surely," exclaimed Theodosia, "that excludes all but professed believers; and I am glad to find that this claimant has the first mark, at least, of a true Church. I have always admired the zeal and self-denying piety of Mr. Wesley, and am glad he had such correct views of what was necessary to membership in the Church of Christ; and yet I hardly understand how these views are compatible with the system of seekership and infant baptism. I have been under the impression that many of the members of the Methodist Churches had never even pretended to be converted people, but that they had joined the Church as seekers, passed their six months' probation, and had simply been *retained* or confirmed as members on the recommendation of the class-leader."

"The actual and the theoretical Methodist Church," replied Mr. Courtney, "may be somewhat different. It is very certain that we read and hear every week of persons *joining* the Methodist Church as seekers: and it is equally certain that

Methodists, as well as other Pedobaptists, contend that persons are by baptism made members of the Church. Mr. Wesley himself expressly says, that '*by baptism we are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ its Head. The Jews were admitted into the Church by circumcision; so are Christians by baptism.* For as many as are baptized into Christ, (in his name,) have thereby put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27; that is, are mystically united to Christ, and made one with him. For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body, (1 Cor. xii. 13,) namely, the Church, the body of Christ, from which spiritual, vital union with him proceeds the influence of his grace on those that are baptized, as from our union with the Church a share in all its privileges, and in all the promises Christ has made to it.' (See Doctrinal Tracts, p. 248, Treatise on Baptism.) And again, on p. 250, 'There can be no reasonable doubt but it [baptism] was intended to last as long as *the Church into which it is the appointed means of entering.*'"

"You need not have gone to Mr. Wesley," said Mr. Percy, "for the Discipline itself teaches very plainly that baptism is the door of entrance to the Church, and consequently that all the baptized are, by that act, made members of the Church. See the Ritual for Baptism, chap. 5th, sec. 2d, where the minister, coming to the font, is instructed to say, 'Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost, I beseech you to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant this child the thing which by nature he cannot have, that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and *received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same*' And thus exhorted, the people, through the minister, are taught to pray that the '*child now to be*

baptized may receive the fulness of God's grace, and *ever remain* in the number of his faithful and elect children'—precisely the same language which is used farther on in reference to the baptized adults; and it would seem that if adults are made members by baptism, the infants are by the same process. Like the Presbyterians, however, they repudiate the act, and practically deny the membership. They give them no more Church privileges than if they had never had the holy water sprinkled on their foreheads, and are thus guilty of the inconsistency of refusing to *commune with*, or recognize as Church members, those whom they seem so anxious to bring into the Church by baptism."

"But how is it with *the seekers*, Mr. Courtney? Are they not counted as Church members? I am sure they count themselves as such. Mrs. Babbleton told me, just before we left home, that two of her daughters had joined the Church during a protracted meeting which had just closed, and that *one* of them had professed *conversion*. I know they *both* partook of the Lord's Supper, and seemed to have all the privileges that any Church member has in their denomination; and I do not understand how they can be entitled to all the *privileges* of membership and yet be out of the Church."

"The difference," said Mr. Courtney, "between a member in full, and a member on probation, is simply this: the first cannot be excluded from Church privileges except by the *preacher* in charge, and that not until after trial and conviction. The other can be cast out at any time by the *class-leader*, without any trial or accusation. With *this* exception, they are *equal partakers in all the rights and immunities of Church-membership*; and whether converted or unconverted, all sit down together at the table of the Lord. 'There is,' in the language of the Discipline, 'only *one* condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, and that is, a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be

saved from their sins;' and these societies are the Methodist Churches, if they have any Churches at all. 'They do consist in part of unconverted people. They *may* consist *entirely* of such. It *often* happens that there is in them a *majority* of such; and this majority can recommend candidates for license to preach; can witness the *trial* of accused members, and, so far as the laity have any part in *Church discipline*, it may be, and is, in the hands of men *who have never made any pretensions to the possession of true faith in Christ*, but only have expressed a *desire* for it.

"It is '*the society*,' or a *leader's meeting*, that recommends persons to be licensed to preach. See Discipline, chap. 2d, quest. 3, ans. 4. It is '*the society*,' or a '*select number of them*,' before which the preacher is to try an accused member. Chap. 4, ques. 2, ans. 1. If the society were mostly converted people, I see nothing in the Discipline to hinder the preacher, if he chose to do it, from selecting those whom he knew to be the *unconverted probationers* to try the cause; nor can I see, after a careful examination of the Discipline, that the *full* member, as he is called, has any single privilege as a Church member which is not equally conceded to the so-called *probationer*, so long as it shall graciously please his class-leader to permit him to remain in '*society*.'

"If those who have made no profession of saving faith are permitted to enjoy all the *privileges* of Church members, and exercise all the prerogatives of Church members, it can be a matter of no consequence whether they are technically *called* Church members or not. It is *things*, not names, we must be governed by. If these societies form *any part* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and they consist not of professed believers upon Jesus, but in part or in whole of those who are merely '*seeking the power of godliness*,' who have only professed *conviction* and not conversion, we must of necessity conclude that the Methodist Episcopal Church does not consist *exclusively*

of those who have professed their faith in Christ. Paul did not receive the jailer when he had merely asked what he must do to be saved. He waited until he had done what he was instructed to do. Nor did we, in all our examination, find any instance of members, whether believers or unbelievers, whether converted or only convicted, being received as *probationary Church members*."

"Really," said Theodosia, "I do not feel quite satisfied with this treatment of the Methodist societies. I fear we do not any of us fully understand them, and may unconsciously do them some slight injustice. I do wish some Methodist were here to plead their cause, and explain apparent difficulties. I know that they have done much to spread Christ's gospel; I know that many of them are earnest and devoted Christians, patterns of piety which I long to be able to copy. I have read the lives of Wesley and Fletcher, and others among them, and am sure they could not *designedly* have gone counter to the teachings of God's Word. They *meant* to serve the Master, and to lead men and women in the way to heaven; and surely *their Church must have more marks of a true Church than the Episcopal or Roman Catholic*"

"Wesley and Fletcher, madam, lived and died as members of the English Episcopal Church. They had no idea of leaving it for any other. What they desired was, to infuse new life into its half-rotten carcass. They sought not to destroy, but to reform it; and if *their personal piety* makes the Church in which they had their membership a *true Church of Christ*, it makes the Church of England such. But let me again remind you, that it is not individuals, not persons, *but organizations*, which we are examining. The piety of Pascal, of Fénelon, of Madam Adorna or Madam Guyon, or even of Thomas à Kempis himself, could not make the Church of Rome, to which they belonged, a Church of Christ. No more could *that* even of the martyrs who bled for the Church of England

make it a Church of Christ. *Good people* may, by birth or education, or errors of judgment, become connected with *organizations* which have no single feature of a Christian Church, yet such connection will not *change* the *nature of the organization*. It is true, that if Wesley had required, as a condition of membership in his societies, that piety which he himself exhibited *after his conversion*, they would not have been subject to the objection we are now considering. They would in that case have consisted *exclusively* of professed believers. But however pious he may have been, however devoted many of his followers have been, and may be now, yet he himself declares that the '*only* prerequisite for admission to his *societies*' is a *desire* of salvation. They, according to his own words, consist of those who *have the form* and are *seeking* the power of godliness. Now all we have to do is, to determine whether *this* was the basis of membership in the New Testament Churches. Was *this* the condition of membership established by Christ and the apostles? If *not*, then *his societies* were not, and without a change in this particular could not be, Churches of Christ. This is as plain as common sense can make it."

"Yes, Mr. Courtney, I see that, and admit its force; but still I would feel better satisfied if we could compel some intelligent *Methodist* to see it and admit it with us."

"Your wish to have a Methodist to assist in our discussion can very easily be gratified," said Doctor Thinkwell, "if you will but postpone the conversation until to-morrow. The presiding elder of this district is my nearest neighbor, and a special friend. He is, moreover, a man who takes delight in the defence of whatever is peculiar in the system which he advocates and of which he makes a part. The societies in this region regard him as an oracle, whose authority is, in matters of faith, second only to that of the bishop himself."

"Do, then, let us wait," exclaimed the lady. "We have

talked too long to-day already. I am sure you must all be tired but me; and, besides, you know, Doctor, you have promised to take us in and show us the Capitol, and the bridge, and the other marvellous things in and about your famous City of Rocks."

NINTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

In which the parties pass by and carefully examine the so-called Methodist Episcopal Church, assisted by the Presiding Elder and his amiable wife. Strange disclosures in the history of the Discipline.

WE will not detain the attention of the reader by giving a narrative of the evening visit to the city. We will not describe the magnificent capitol, the pride of Tennessee, at once the tomb and the noblest monument of the architect who conceived its plan, but died before he could witness its completion. We will not describe the city, with its beauties or its blemishes, as it lay spread out before them like a map, while they stood in the portico of this immense pile of massive rocks.

Nor will we stop to describe the ride round the plantation the next morning. We have no time to tell of the romantic scenery upon the river's brink; the shaded avenues and terraced banks of flowers. We can hardly even pause to go with Theodosia to the whitewashed cabin of old 'Aunt Rachel,' and hear her tell how, when her master was an infidel, she prayed year after year that God would shine into his heart, and show him what a blessed Saviour Jesus is; and how at last God heard her prayers, and sent him home a Christian. 'O missis! if you only knowed how *my heart cried* when master used to go on so about the Bible, you wouldn't blame old Rachel for shouting sometimes now, when I sees him study

the blessed book so, day after day. O, de blessed Lord has lone great things for ua, missis. And now, if master could only see his way into the Church, seems to me I could say, like ole Simeon, 'Lord, now thou lets me die in peace.' But I hope he's comin' right bym-by."

"Maybe you could tell him which the Church of Jesus is, Aunt Rachel."

"Ah yes, missis, if they'd only ask the ole nigger, she'd tell them how to get into the Church."

"What directions would you give?" asked Theodosia, greatly interested.

"O, I'd just say, Do as my blessed Jesus did. He was baptized himself, and he wants all his people to be baptized. Let them go down into the water, 'cordin' to his commandment."

"Then you are a Baptist, Aunt Rachel."

"Yes, missis, I was baptized more 'an thirty years ago."

"But we are studying now to see if the Methodist Church is not the true Church of Jesus Christ. What do you think about it, Aunt Rachel? Don't you think there are as many Methodists in heaven as there are Baptists?"

"Why, no, missis, bless your heart! the Baptists has been agoing there ever since the days when John baptized in Jordan, and they tell me that the Methodists just begun a little while ago. The Methodists is mighty good people, missis; but they han't been agoing to heaven so long as the Baptists have. I hope master will hunt out in that blessed book til he finds the good old way."

"Your master has invited the Methodist minister and his lady to come over and spend the day with us, and they will make a Methodist of him if they can."

"Ah, missis, the minister is a mighty good man. I loves to hear him preach about Jesus; I loves to hear him tell about heaven; I loves to hear him sing and pray, and they

shall have the best dinner that ole Rachel can fix up; but they isn't goin' to make master be a Methodist, I know that."

"How do you know that, Aunt Rachel?"

"'Cause, missis, master goes *by the book*, an' if the Methodist Church was in the book, people would have found it long time before they did."

The Doctor had himself gone over to his neighbor's, after supper, and explained to him in what position the discussion stood, and desired him and his good lady to come and spend the day, and bring with them a copy of the Discipline, and any other works which might assist in the complete understanding of the system called Methodism.

At an early hour the visitors came, not prepared for or expecting a *debate*, but ready to engage in social and kind *discussion* of any points of difference which might arise between them and those they came to see.

Doctor Thinkwell introduced the subject of conversation by saying that he and his other guests had found themselves embarrassed in their investigation of the claims of the Methodist Church to be the Church of Christ, by a fear that, in the absence of some one to represent her claims, who was familiar with her polity and interested in her welfare, they might do her some possible injustice. He desired to understand precisely upon what ground she stood, and to give her claims *all* the weight to which they could be any way entitled.

"If you expect me to enter into any labored defence of the Church of which I have the honor to be an humble minister," replied the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "I hope you will excuse me if I disappoint you; but if you merely want such information as I possess concerning the doctrines, the practice, the polity of the Methodist Church, I will take pleasure in telling you all that *can be of service* to your investigation. The Methodists, sir,

are people who love the light. We do not wish to hide our principles from friend or foe.

"I am glad to hear you talk so," said Theodosia, "for I feel that *we* need more light upon this subject. I do not think we understand just what the Methodist Church is in regard to her organization and her membership. You must know, sir, that we think we have ascertained, from a careful examination of the Scriptures, that in the Churches established by the apostles, *none* were admitted to membership *who had not professed a saving faith in Christ*; or, in other words, that they were designed to be composed only of converted people. Now if this is so, you will see that we cannot recognize any organization as the true Church of Christ which does not adopt the same rule, and receive as members *only* those who have given evidence of genuine conversion. Now in talking about your Church yesterday, we were in doubt whether you did not admit the professedly *unconverted*; that is, those who have made *no* profession of saving faith."

"I do not see how you could have doubted for a moment, madam, except from sheer ignorance of our practice. We are *so cautious* to admit none but true believers, that we require of all who would unite with us *six months' probation*, in order that we may be sure of their piety. The great object of Mr. Wesley, as he again and again declared, was to secure a *holy people*."

"And yet I am told he admitted infants to baptism, and expressly said, that by baptism they were made members of the Church."

"Well, what if he did? Are not infants *holy*? Is it not of such that the kingdom of heaven is composed? Would to God that all our adult members were as pure and blameless as the little babes!"

"But do you treat them as Church members when they grow up? Do you not require them to join on probation, just

like a sinner who had never been received at all? How is that? They are *in the Church*—made members by baptism, and yet you do not permit them to *commune*, or recognize their membership in any way whatever. And by requiring them to *join* the Church again, you virtually declare that they *are not* and never have been members. Please tell me, if they are members after they have been baptized, *when do they cease* to be members? At what age do you disown them? or in what manner is their membership abrogated? Do they lose it simply by *growing up*? If so, you seem to consider it a *sin* to grow. Please explain this to us first, and then I have a question to ask about the probationers, or *seekers*, as they are commonly called.”

The Rev Mr Stiptain moved his seat towards the table on which he had laid his bundle of books when he came in, and picking out a very small one, remarked, “I have here the *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church South*, which does not differ materially from that of the *Methodist Episcopal Church, or the Church North*. This is our standard of doctrine and discipline, and if you wish to learn the exact relation of the baptized children to the Church, you will find it here, chap. iii., sec. iii., quest. 1, ans. 5: ‘Let all baptized children be faithfully instructed in the nature, design, privileges, and obligations of their baptism. Those of them who are well disposed may be admitted to our class-meetings and love-feasts; and such as are truly serious, and manifest a desire to flee from the wrath to come, shall be advised to join *the society* as probationers.’”

“But let me ask, sir, if you do not advise *all persons* who are ‘*truly serious, and desire to flee from the wrath to come,*’ to join the society as probationers, just the same as you do those who have been baptized in childhood?”

“Certainly we do.”

“Then you treat the baptized and unbaptized exactly alike

as regards admission to the Church; and yet you say the baptized were made Church members in their childhood, and have never lost their membership: how can they *join* societies as probationers for membership when they are members already, and have been from their very infancy?"

The Reverend Mr. Stiptain cleared his throat, and hitched his chair still nearer to the table, and seemed to be looking for another book. He did not try to answer the question,* and the kind-hearted host, to relieve his evident embarrassment, called his attention to the other portion of the extract which he had read from the Discipline.

"It seems," said he, "that you ministers, or the members, are to '*instruct the baptized children in the nature, design, privileges and obligations of their baptism.*' This instruction is, of course, to be given after they are old enough to understand; and as one of the chief ministers, you are, of course, familiar with the substance of what is to be taught to them concerning these points. If it will not trouble you too much, I would be glad to hear what is in your Church understood to be the *nature, design, and privileges* of baptism as conferred on infants. Of course you must mean *something* by it. The baptized child is, of course, understood to stand in a different relation to God, or to the Church, or in some way to be in a different condition from one that is unbaptized. What is the change effected by it? What does it really do, and for what purpose is it used? If we can ascertain this, it will go far to remove the doubts which seem to trouble Mrs. Percy. For if it is employed to make them members of your Church, then Church members we must consider them until they are disowned by an official act, as public and significant as that by which they are received. If it is employed for this purpose, and does *not* accomplish the purpose, it would appear to me

* Can any Methodist answer it? Let each one try.

to be not only a useless, but a very foolish ceremony. But if it is used, *not* for this, but some other purpose, please tell us what that other purpose is. I ask merely for the sake of information. You have, of course, *given* the instruction called for in the Discipline hundreds of times, and can readily tell us what it is."

"I do not know that I can answer your question more satisfactorily," replied the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "than by reading the explanations of the father and founder of our societies, the venerable Mr. John Wesley. No Methodist will ever be counted as deuying the true faith, or departing from the right practice, while he can present the unquestioned authority of Mr. Wesley for what he believes or does; and I therefore prefer to call your attention to his instructions, rather than my own. I have here Mr. Wesley's own teachings on this subject; and as he was the author of the instructions in the Discipline, which I have read, it is very evident that it was *his own* teachings concerning the '*nature, design, and privileges of baptism*,' that the Discipline refers to, and requires the ministers to inculcate."

"That would seem to be almost self-evident," said the Doctor: "and Mr. Wesley's expositions must set the matter at rest at once and for ever. Please read them to us. We had ourselves referred to them, but only by memory."

"They are," continued the Presiding Elder, "to be found in his Sermons, and in the Doctrinal Tracts published by order of the General Conference, as a sort of Appendix to the Discipline. I have here the volume of Tracts; and this fact, that it is not only *sanctioned by the Conference*, but published by their *positive order*, and under their *supervision*, will be a sufficient guaranty to you and all concerned, that the book contains a fair and honest exposition of what are the real teachings required by the Discipline in the passage I have read

"On page 242, Tract xii.. we read, in the language of Mr

Wesley himself, 'Concerning baptism, I shall inquire, What it is? What benefits we receive by it? Whether our Saviour designed it to remain always in his Church? and who are the proper subjects of it?' '1. What it is. It is the initialory sacrament which enters us into covenant with God.' "

"Never mind *what it is*," said the Doctor. "We think we understand that already. But tell us what the *benefits* are which *infants* baptized according to the Discipline are expected to realize from it. *Does it bring them into the Church?* or leave them, like heathens, still in the world?"

"O, if that is all you want, you have it in a very few plain words, on page 248: '*By baptism we are admitted into the Church*, and consequently made members of Christ its Head.' And again, on page 254, s. 6, 'Thirdly, If infants ought to come to Christ, if they are capable of admission into the Church of God, and consequently of solemn sacramental dedication to him, then they are proper subjects of baptism. But infants are capable of coming to Christ, of *admission into the Church*, and solemn dedication to God. [P. 255:] Therefore his disciples or ministers are still to suffer infants to come; that is, to *be brought into the Church*, which cannot be but by baptism. Yea, "and of such," says our Lord, "is the kingdom of heaven." Not of such only as were like these infants; for if they themselves were not fit to be subjects of that kingdom, how could others be so because they were like them? *Infants, therefore, are capable of being admitted into the Church, and have a right thereto.* Even under the Old Testament, they were admitted into it by circumcision; and can we suppose they are in a worse condition under the Gospel than they were under the Law? and that our Lord would take away any privileges which they then enjoyed? Would he not rather make additions to them? This then is a third ground: infants ought to come to Christ, and no man ought to forbid

them. *They are capable of admission into the Church of God, therefore they are proper subjects for baptism.'*

"So again on page 266: 'The children of the Jews were visible members of the Jewish Church under the covenant of Abraham, and as such were received into it by circumcision as the door of entrance. The children of Christians were never cut off from this privilege when their fathers were received into the Church, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, and therefore *they are members of the Christian Church* also, under spiritual promises and blessings.'

"I trust these extracts will make clear to you what were Mr. Wesley's teachings on the point about which you ask for information."

"Excuse me, Mr. Stiptain," said Theodosia; "but is it not true that the Methodist Church *now* has departed from the doctrines of Mr. Wesley on this subject? Do they still hold, as he did, that *baptism admits infants into the Church*, and makes them members of it? Could you not direct our attention to some more recently published work, which would give us with certainty their *present* faith and practice in regard to this interesting point?"

"I am happy to say, madam, that I can. Here is our brother, P. D. Gorrie's most admirable '*History of METHODISM as it WAS and as it IS*,' recommended by two presiding elders, who examined it in manuscript, and who testify over their official signatures 'that the facts therein stated are correct, as far as they have been able to judge,' and recommend the work, especially to the members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as containing 'much useful information in relation to the history *doctrines, and institutions* of Methodism.'

"In this standard work, published in 1852, we have a plain and comprehensive statement of the present faith and teachings of the Church upon this point. And first, as to

'*the nature*' of baptism. Here, on page 170, I read as follows: 'The nature of baptism. 1. It is a figurative ordinance, symbolical of our death unto sin, and our being born again from above; of being purified by the water of regeneration and receiving of the Holy Ghost.'"

"Pardon me for interrupting you; but do you understand that when an infant is baptized, its baptism signifies *that it has died to sin* and been *born again* from above; that *it is*, or has been, purified by the water of *regeneration*, and has received the Holy Ghost? This is all very appropriate and beautiful as applied to a *converted man*, but how can it be true of an unconscious babe?

"But go on sir; I ask your pardon; I ought not to have interrupted you."

He reads again: "'2. *Baptism is a sign of profession*, a rite which was instituted under the law and retained under the gospel, as the distinguishing mark or sign of a profession of faith. As the generic term, to *baptize*, means to purify and cleanse, not only is there in baptism a sign of inward moral cleansing, but a sign of outward moral conformity to the law of God and the rules of the Church on earth.'"

"So, when you baptize an infant," said Theodosia, "it is a sign that it professes, or *has professed*, its *faith* in Christ, while yet it does not know its right hand from its left, and could not be made to understand that such a being as Christ ever existed. Please, sir, go on."

"'3. *Baptism is also considered as the door of entrance into the Church*. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," "Repent and be baptized," "Then were they baptized, both men and women," "Then Philip baptized him," are passages which clearly show that water-baptism is designed to be an initiatory rite, and that in this way men are *generally* to be received into the Church. We say *generally*, for we dare not say that no person can be a member of the household

of faith without water-baptism, for we know not that the apostles even were ever baptized, except in the washing of feet; but, as a general rule, baptism is and ought to be the initiatory rite.' ”

“That is enough,” said Theodosia, “to answer my question. If ‘baptism is considered the door of entrance into the Church,’ then all who have been baptized must be considered as having passed through the door and as being in the Church. It is true you speak as though you were doubtful whether people might not be *born* in the Church, or get into it in some other way, without going through the door; but there is no question that those who *have* gone through *are actually in*; and if they are in the Church they are Church members, and we must so consider them, until they are officially *expelled* by those who have the power of discipline.”

“If any of you have any doubt remaining,” said Mr Courtney, very quietly, “it may be dispelled by turning to the 173d page.”

The Rev. Mr. Stiptain politely handed him the book, and he read as follows :

“‘That infants are scriptural subjects of baptism appears from the following considerations: “1st. The perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, which included children as well as adults.” “2d. *The eligibility of children to Church-membership.* That infants were members of the Jewish Church is evident from the fact of their circumcision, which was the initiatory rite, or door of admission into the Church of God. Can we possibly conceive that the children of Christian parents are entitled to lesser privileges than were the children of Jewish parents; or would it be any inducement to a pious Jew of the present day to be told that although his children are members of the Jewish Church, yet, on his embracing Christianity and becoming a member of the Christian Church, his children must be thrust out until they attain to adult years ?’

Does not our Saviour explicitly say in regard to young children, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven?' The kingdom must mean, either the kingdom of glory, the work of grace in the heart, or the Church of Christ on the earth. Now, in whatever sense it is used in the text, it must include the idea of *infant Church-membership*. Is a young child fit for the kingdom of glory? Then why not for the kingdom of grace? If fit for the Church triumphant, then why not for the Church on earth? And was not the promise of God given to Christian parents and their '*children*, and to all that are afar off?' If so—and there can be no reasonable doubt of it—then are infants entitled to the initiatory rite which *will formally admit them into the visible Church of Christ*; and to debar them that privilege is not only unwise, but unjust to the children whom God has given us." "

"And here also, near the bottom of the 174th page: 'Again, if children were fit subjects for circumcision, they are equally fit subjects of baptism. And if it be inquired, as it sometimes is, What good does it do a young child to baptize it? we might reply, What good did it do a young child to circumcise it? In the latter case it admitted the child to *Church-membership*, and in the former case *it does the same*. What more than this does it do in the case of an adult?' "

"You see, madam," said the Presiding Elder, "that we Methodists do not entirely agree with you in regard to the teachings of the Scriptures about what constitutes a true Church. You think it excludes all but professed believers. We understand that it includes believers and their children, and in fact all children who have been baptized."

"We do not need, for our own satisfaction, to recur to the evidence on which our rule is based," she replied. "We settled it after a careful study of all the facts and arguments, including those presented by your author. We are now endeavoring to apply it to the various claimants for Church

honors, and my only doubt was, whether you Methodist Church *did* regard the baptized children as *Church-members*, or whether you baptized them for some other purpose.

"It seems, however, that I had no occasion to doubt at all. Not only the earliest, but the latest, expounders of your faith and practice clearly avow and contend for infant Church-membership.

"You expressly declare that baptism is the door of entrance into the Church; that infants are baptized because they are entitled to Church-membership, and that by baptism the child is admitted to Church-membership just as much as the adult.

"I cannot help wondering how they get out of the Church after they have been thus admitted, so that they have *to join it on probation*, just like the unbaptized heathen; or *how you dare to refuse to commune with your own Church members*, when you complain so much of us Baptists because we cannot conscientiously commune with those whom we do not recognize as members of the Church at all. But I can no longer doubt that people are made members of the Methodist Church without their own knowledge or consent, while they are little babies. And I will now, with your permission, propound my other question, which is this. Are those people called *seekers*, or probationers, members of the Methodist Church?"

"Certainly not, madam. That is, they are not *full* members."

"I do not know, sir, that I precisely understand you," replied Theodosia. "We did not, in our examination of the first Churches as described in the Scriptures, find any class of persons (so far as I can now recollect) who were Church members and yet not *full* Church members. They were either members or not members. They were either in the Church or out of it. They were either entitled to all the privileges of Church-membership, or to none at all. Yet you *SEEM to have a class who are neither in nor out of the Church*; but I suppose they are *either in one condition or the other*. They are in the Church.

or else they are *not* in the Church; and I would be glad to have some definite and reliable *authority* by which we can decide whether the probationers *are really* IN or OUT. If you do not feel prepared to say for yourself, could you not, as in the other case, refer us to some statement of Mr. Wesley, or other of your standard writers?"

"I would say, madam, that they are members of *the society*, but *not of the Church*."

"That is certainly very explicit, and I am much obliged to you for so prompt a reply to a question which, I feared, you might think almost impertinent; and now if you will explain to me the exact difference between the society and the Church, I will begin to understand the case."

"The society, madam, consists of all the probationers and Church members considered as one body. The Church consists of those who have been members of the society for six months, and by the faithful observance of its rules have satisfied their class-leader that they would make good members, have been recommended by him, and then have been 'examined by the minister before the Church in regard to the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.'" (*See Discipline*, chap. iii., ans. 3.)

"Then your society is *not* the Church, or *any part* of the Church, but, like a Sunday-school, or a Bible-class, an institution *outside the Church* for the instruction and training of those who desire membership; and you recognize none as Church members, and never admit them to Church privileges, until they have passed their six months' trial, have been recommended, examined, and officially received. This is very different from what I had supposed. We were under the impression that all the members of 'society' were entitled to equal privileges, and all enjoyed the same rights, whether they had passed their 'term' or not."

"You may rest assured, madam, that we count none as *members of the Church* except they have been received as I described. We intend to have a *holy Church*, composed of those who have not only *professed* their faith, but by sufficient *trial* have shown the *truth* of their profession."

"Will you permit *me* to ask one question?" said Mr. Courtney.

"Certainly; a dozen, if you wish."

"Please tell us, then, what are the *privileges* which those you call Church members enjoy, and which are not enjoyed *equally* by the *seeker* who joined the society but yesterday? Do you not invite them *both alike* to sit down at the table of the Lord, or rather to kneel down and partake of the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you not permit and urge the seeker to have his children baptized, and made Church members, just as you do the parent who has passed probation?"

"We do, sir."

"Cannot a class-meeting consisting *in part* or *altogether* (except the leader) of unconverted seekers, recommend a member for license to exhort, just as well as the so-called Church?"

"Undoubtedly it can." (*See Corrie*, p. 303.)

"Is it not the *society*, or a select number of it, before which the preacher in charge shall cite those who refuse to attend class, and a majority of whose votes shall decide whether they have been guilty of wilful neglect, according to chap. iv., sec. iii., quest. 1, ans. 2, of the Discipline?"

"So I admit it reads, sir."

"Is it not before the *society*, or a select number of them, that an accused member must be brought for trial, according to chap. iv., sec. iii., quest. 2, ans. 1?"

"It is so put down in the book, sir."

“Then if the members of the *society* enjoy each and every *privilege* that a member of the *Church* does, what is the use of *calling* some of them Church members, and others members of society? You see I am likely to avail myself of your permission to ask a dozen questions instead of one.”

“I am glad you ask them, sir. Methodism seeks not to hide herself. Whatever she is, she is willing the world should know it.”

“What then, I ask again, is the *practical* difference between a member of society and a member of the Church? You call them by different *names*, but you treat them as though they were the very same. The only difference which I can discover is, that the member yet in his probation may be excommunicated without trial, by the decree of the *class-leader*, while one who has passed his term and been received, cannot be excommunicated except *by the preacher*, and that after a formal accusation and trial. Now if these seekers are *not* Church members, you are guilty of taking Christ's ordinances *out of the Church*, and giving them *to the people of the world*. If they *are* Church members, then your Church consists, in many instances, to a large extent, of people *who make no pretension to the possession of true religion*, and no profession of true faith in Christ. In either case I should fear to call it the Church of Christ. But we are losing time from our general investigation. I presume we are all satisfied upon this point now. We must regard that organization as the Methodist Church in which the *privileges* of the Church are enjoyed, whether Methodists *call* it so or not. That *is the Church* which acts the part of the Church. This, in the Methodist economy, is the *society*; and ‘there is,’ according to the Discipline, chap. i., sec 4, ‘only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies;’ and that *is not* faith in Christ, but only ‘a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins;’ which is understood

to mean simply, that they are seriously concerned upon the subject of salvation, and willing to make some effort to secure it, and can be persuaded to join *the class* for that purpose.

"Our next mark will lead us to inquire whether *the members of the Methodist Church have been baptized upon a profession of their faith?*"

"I suppose," said Mr. Stiptain, "that you Baptists will hardly admit that we have been baptized at all."

"In regard to this point," said Mr. Courtney, "there can be no room for doubt or cavil. If sprinkling or pouring is not baptism, few of you will *pretend* that they have been baptized. If only immersion is baptism, the Discipline will testify that baptism is *required of none*, but only *permitted* to those who prefer it; and if the directions of the Discipline could be fully carried out in practice, and *all the infants* could be baptized, *there would be no such thing as baptism upon a profession of faith*, since it is certain that little infants neither have nor profess to have a saving faith in Christ. These positions we have settled before, and it is now enough respectfully to say, that the Methodist Episcopal Church stands, in regard to this matter, just where we found her mother of England, and her grandmother of Rome. Not to waste our time, therefore, let us hasten on."

"Our next mark," said Theodosia, "will lead us to inquire whether the Methodist Episcopal Church *is an independent, local society, recognizing, in matters of religion, no authority but that of Christ above its own*"

"And this need not detain us as long as the last," said Mr. Percy; "for it is a fact too notorious to require any proof that the Methodist societies are *not* independent organizations, but each is a *part* of a great establishment, somewhat like the Church of England, out of which it came, and after which it was mainly modelled. The local society of the Methodists is no more an independent Church than a local society of Roman

Catholicism is an independent Church. It is entirely dependent on persons *outside of itself* for the discipline even of its own members. It cannot determine for itself who shall be received or who excluded; who shall be commended or who reprov'd. The preacher sent to them without their own consent, sometimes against their urgent remonstrance, has all the power in his hands; they can do nothing but obey."

"O no, Mr. Percy, not quite so bad as that. Did not Mr. Courtney himself say that the societies recommended the persons to be licensed, and that an offending member was tried before the whole society, or at least a part of it, selected by the minister in charge?"

"Certainly he did, but what of it? It serves to delude the people (if I may use the expression without offence to these good friends) with a shadow of authority without a particle of substance. There is the Church, or society, for example, in our little town. Last year they had a minister whom they dearly loved, and they sent up to Conference a unanimous and urgent request that he should be sent back to them. But he was sent to the opposite side of the State. One, who had been there some years before, and was far from being popular, and who had reasons why he himself did not desire to be forced upon them, was, against their wishes and his own, compelled to take the charge of their affairs, and they must accept his ministrations or have none; for so the bishop willed it."

"I trust you will excuse me, Mr. Percy, if I say the society must have been very silly to ask what they knew could not be granted," replied the Reverend Mr. Stiptain. "They must have known the rules, and, as good Methodists, should have gladly conformed to them."

"I grant all that, sir; but still, it shows how far the local society is from being independent. They cannot say who

shall or who shall not occupy the house which they have built with their own money, or who shall or who shall not be the instructors of themselves and their children in matters which concern their souls' salvation. The bishop, whom they have probably never seen, and who knows nothing of them but by the reports of his subordinates, takes away or sends them ministers at his own discretion, and they dare not so much as complain, lest a worse thing come upon them.

"Now *this* minister, *thus sent against their will*, has, if I understand your system, all the power of discipline in his own hands, or in the hands of those whom he can commonly influence, to carry out his will. The society itself has *no* power at all. It *seems* to have, but it strikes me that when we look at the subject carefully, the illusion vanishes. Let us suppose, for illustration, that the son of Mr. Markman (the gentleman with whom this preacher had some difficulty when he was there before) has, during the past six months, joined the society on probation, and the minister has determined that he shall not be a member: he has only to whisper to his class-leader, who is appointed by himself, that this young man's name had better be *dropped*, and the class-leader fails to report him for confirmation. He is virtually excommunicated, without accusation, without trial, and without fault."

"O, no!" exclaimed Theoḡosia. "The class-leader would be too conscientious to comply with his request."

"Then he would quietly remove him, and put another in his place; for it is his privilege and duty 'to appoint all the leaders, and *change* them when he sees necessary.' It would be strange indeed if he could not find some one who could be relied upon to carry out his wishes."

"I am very sorry, sir, to see that you have so bad an opinion of us," said Mr. Stiptain. "I am sure you never heard of one of our preachers thus abusing the power with which

he has been intrusted for the good of the cause. Nor would such tyranny on his part be tolerated by those to whom he is responsible for his conduct."

"I grant that it is not very likely to happen in the present generation, Mr. Stiptain. But organizations like the Methodist Church are long-lived, and power has a tendency to accumulate in the hands where it is lodged. I am not speaking of what has been done, or what is likely to be done just now, but of *what may be done* under the *sanction* of your Discipline. Your ministers are, doubtless, many of them very humble, pious people; but *there may be* among them *some few* who are proud, selfish, revengeful, and ambitious. Now I have, for the sake of argument, supposed this to be the case with the one of whom I am speaking. Do you not see how it would be in his power to shut this pious young man out of the Church, without any violation of the rules of discipline, and against the unanimous wish of the Church itself that he should come in?"

"I see, indeed, how the thing might possibly be done; but I can assure you it would cost the minister his license. He would never do it but once."

"I do not see how you could reach him at all. He has no need to tell *you* all the *motives* of his conduct; and for the *act* itself, he did but what it was his privilege, nay, he will declare, it was his *duty* to do. Let us look at it a moment. We will suppose a case, merely to test the extent of the power of discipline which is in the hands of the membership, the Church, or society, or whatever you may choose to call it. We will suppose that this minister is a hypocrite—a thing, to my mind, not *very* improbable; that he is determined to shut young Markman out of the Church for the two years he is likely to remain in charge. He talks with the class-leader; and if he finds one too favorable to the young man, he *changes* him, until he finds one that will reverently obey *him*, as he has promised to obey *his* chief ministers

This class-leader may be an *unconverted* —there are such people in the Methodist Churches. To give a show of justice to the proceeding, he may conceive and report to the preacher some vile slander affecting the young man's religious if not his moral character. And the young man comes to the Church for redress; demands that the slanderer shall be tried and excluded. Do you think he could accomplish any thing against the preacher and the class-leader? Do you think the society could lift a finger for the young man's rights?"

"Certainly," exclaimed Theodosia; "the Church will call the slanderer to account, expel him from the society, and thus vindicate the character of the innocent."

"Not at all, madam; the Church has no such power. She can *accuse*, or any member of her can *accuse*; but she cannot try or expel any more than she can receive."

"Certainly you must be mistaken, Mr. Percy. Did we not read, on page 96 of the Discipline, that an accused member should be brought to trial 'before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher. And if the accused be found guilty by the decision of a majority of the members before whom he is brought for trial, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the Word of God, and sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, the minister or preacher in charge is to expel him?'"

"Certainly we read, or might have read thus; but what does it amount to? As I said before, it *seems* to give the Church some shadow of authority; but look at it closely, and the illusion vanishes. *The power is all in the hands of the preacher.*"*

* The members of the society have the same right to control the discipline of their own body that a recent letter-writer says the

"I do not see how that can be, when the accused is to be tried by the society."

"Let us trace out the progress of the trial in the case we have supposed, and you will see not only how it can be, but how it *must* be. As a lawyer, I have had some experience in these things.

"Young Markman accuses the class-leader of slander. To whom must the accusation be made? To the preacher in charge. It is his duty to try members. And what if he refuse to entertain the charge? What if he say, 'Young man, go along about your business; I do not believe a word you say. It is much more likely that you, a mere probationer, should lie, than this good and pious class-leader.' There the matter will rest. The leader is responsible *only* to the preacher, and if this slander were a part of his report as leader, there is no one else who has a right to intermeddle in the business.

"The preacher may try or refuse to try, as he sees best. Here is the decision of the Conference, as given by Gorrie, page 325, sec. 32: 'Is a preacher at liberty to refuse to call an accused member to trial, when charges have been preferred by respectable members of the Church? He is, if there are sufficient reasons existing why he should not do so.' And of that he is to be sole judge.

"But what if he should feel compelled by the force of public opinion to permit a trial? The trial must be before the society, or a *select number of them*. The preacher decides on bringing it before a *select number*. It is his privilege to do so; and *he* determines how many and of whom that select number shall consist. He sounds his men beforehand, and

people in France have to vote. He says, "*We have entire freedom to vote. A ticket is prepared for us by the government, and we may vote it if we please. But if we do not like the ticket, we can abstain from voting.*"

chooses such as are suited to his purpose. And if a majority of the committee thus chosen by himself do not bring in a verdict in accordance with his wishes, it will be strange indeed. The accuser has no right to object to any one whom the minister may select; and lawyers know that clients never expect full justice from a 'packed' jury.

"But he not only selects his jury with the opportunity to sound every member of it beforehand; he also presides as *judge*. If the accused or the accuser object to any of the jury, it is his province to overrule his objections, if he see fit, and to pronounce them unreasonable. (See Gorrie, p. 323.) If any evidence come up which he prefers shall not be introduced, *he* is to decide the question whether it shall be admitted. (See as above, p. 327.) 'Are questions relating to the admissibility of testimony questions of law? They are, and consequently the *president or chairman of a trial must decide on the admissibility of the testimony.*'

"Now, with power to select the jury, determine all questions of law, and decide on the admissibility of the testimony, what prospect is there that he will not have the case decided as he determines? But if it should be otherwise, 'Who is to determine and award the punishment? *The preacher.*' (See Gorrie as above, p. 323.)

"So, even if convicted, the case is still in the hands of the preacher, who is to determine what the punishment must be, and himself inflict or forbear to inflict it, as he may see best.

"But if the decision of his own 'packed jury,' with himself presiding as judge of the law and the admissibility of testimony, should be against his wishes; if he be so disposed, he can either simply *refuse* to carry out their verdict—for he is sole executive—or he can take the case out of their hands and carry it for a new trial before the Quarterly Conference, consisting of his brother *preachers*—who will find it hard to think him in the wrong—and of stewards, exhorters,

and class-leaders, appointed by himself. The Church or society has *no power at all* to DECIDE any case, unless they decide according to the wishes of the preacher; for we read in chapter iv., section 3, question 2, answer 4: *‘Nevertheless, if in any of the above-mentioned cases the minister or preacher shall differ in judgment from a majority of the society, or the select number, concerning the innocence or guilt of the accused person, the trial in such case may be referred by the minister or preacher to the ensuing quarterly meeting Conference.’*

“Now, I ask, in all kindness and respect—but still I cannot help asking—if the semblance of power given to the society, in the trial of members, is not the veriest shadow, deluding them with the idea of authority, when they have none whatever? Let me, as a lawyer, have the choosing of my jury from persons whom I have already sounded; let me be the judge of the law, and receive or reject the testimony as it may seem best to me, and then let me decide concerning the punishment, and let it devolve on me to inflict it, and it will be very surprising to me if I should be at all desirous to appeal. But let me, in case I should be dissatisfied, have the *second* chance before a tribunal interested in sustaining *my* authority, and a majority of whom had been appointed by myself, and with all of whom my *official position* would give me influence and importance, and I am sure I should not fail to get a verdict which should be perfectly satisfactory to my desires.”

“But,” exclaimed Theodosia, “if you, as a Methodist preacher, should act as you have supposed this one to do, the Church would take up *your* case, and convict you of *connivance at sin and unfaithfulness in duty.*”

“Not at all. The Church, that is, the society, can no more try a preacher than it can try Queen Victoria. The preacher is sent to *govern the Church*, not to be governed by

it. It has no sort of control over him. He is not responsible to it either for his official or his personal misconduct. It can only call the attention of his presiding elder or his bishop to the case. And then, if it were *some crime* expressly forbidden by the word of God, the elder or the bishop would call together three other preachers and proceed to try him; and, if convicted, suspend him from preaching until the meeting of the Conference, when the preachers assembled would finally decide his case. A preacher, you see, can only be tried by *preachers*. But mere maladministration of Church discipline, attended, as it would be in the case supposed, by earnest declarations that he was all the time actuated by a sincere desire for the welfare of the Church, and had no sort of selfish feeling in the case, would hardly be regarded by his fellow-preachers as *a crime*. It would be a mere error of judgment. If it were noticed at all as a wrong, it would come under the head of 'improper tempers, words, or actions.' See *Discipline*, chap. iv., sec. 1, ques. 5: 'What shall be done in cases of improper tempers, words or actions?'

"*Answer.* The person so offending shall be reprimanded by his senior in office. Should a second transgression take place, one, two, or three ministers are to be taken as witnesses. If he be not then cured, he shall be tried at the next Annual Conference, and if found guilty and impenitent, shall be expelled,' etc.

"So you see that all the preacher would have to fear for this, his first offence of the kind, would be a private scolding from his presiding elder.* "

* If any one should doubt that it was the express *intention* of the makers of the Discipline to place the whole power of retaining or excluding members in the hands of the preachers, he can easily be satisfied by consulting the explanatory notes at first appended to the Discipline, and at one time published with it. These notes were prepared by Bishops Coke and Asbury, who presided in the Conference

"That it was the real intention of the Discipline to keep all actual power out of the hands of the people, and vest it exclusively in the *preachers*, is further evident from the fact that the bishops give it as a reason, a sort of apology, for permitting an appeal to be made to the Quarterly Conference, that it is mostly composed of *preachers*. Here is their language; let the people mark it:

"An appeal is allowed in all the cases mentioned in this section to the following quarterly meeting. For though the power of appeal be not mentioned in the last clause, which relates to the sowing of dissensions, yet it is certainly implied. Our work is at present in its infancy, in comparison

which formed the Church, and made, or rather adopted, the Discipline. In reference to this matter, the bishops say, "The grand point to be determined is this: whether the final judgment of an offender, in respect both to the guilt and the censure, should be invested in the minister or in the people? We shall therefore take a view of this part of our economy; first, in the light of Scripture, and secondly, in that of reason." Then from Matthew xviii. 15, 17, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee," etc., they come to the sage conclusion that "here is not a word said of the Church's authority, either to judge or to censure. *On the contrary, the whole authority is expressly delivered into the hands of the minister.*" So that, if they intended by the provisions of the Discipline to place *any part* of the authority in the Church, they belied their own convictions and stultified their own explanation of the word of God.

"But it may be urged," they go on to say, "that the offence must *be first mentioned* to the Church before the offender can be scripturally excluded. 'Tell it to the Church,' says our Lord. And so we do. It is merely for the sake of convenience that in large societies we tell it only to a committee, or representation of the society, or do abundantly more—even *make them witnesses of the whole trial*. But if such societies were to desire it, we would tell the whole unto the Church at large. *But still, we must declare from the plain sense of the word of God* that our Lord invests the minister with the whole authority both of judgment and of censure."—(*Notes on Discipline*, chap. ii, ~~see~~ 8 as quoted in *Emory's History of the Discipline*, pp. 331-333.)

to what we trust it will be, through the blessing of God *Our ministers*, who have the charge of circuits, may not always be so aged and experienced as we might wish them. The appeal to the quarterly meeting is, therefore, allowed to remedy this defect. And this no one can object to. No one, we think, can imagine that the *members of a class*, or the members of the largest *society*, would form so respectable or so impartial a court of judicature as the presiding elder, the travelling and local preachers, and the leaders and stewards, of *the whole circuit*. But the point is quite out of the reach of debate, in respect to those who believe the sacred writings and sincerely reverence them. *The New Testament determines, beyond a doubt, that judgment and censure, in the cases before us, shall be in the MINISTER. Nor could we justify our conduct in investing the Quarterly Conference with the authority of receiving and determining appeals, if it were not almost entirely composed of men who are more or less engaged in the ministry of the word, the stewards being the only exceptions.'*

"Remember, this is what the *bishops* themselves say, in explanation of the Discipline; and shows how much authority the 'people' were to have. (See as above, pp. 337, 338.)

"You see, therefore, that the society, so far from being herself the independent executive of the laws of Christ, has nothing to do but *pay* the preachers and quietly *submit* to their control. So far from being independent, she is dependent on the bishop to say who shall preach in her pulpit, and who shall administer her ordinances, or whether she shall have any preaching or any ordinances. She is dependent on a preacher who is not of her number, who is not chosen by herself, and not responsible to her for his personal or his official conduct, to decide for her who shall be members of her communion, who shall be received, who shall be retained, and who expelled. Or if this power of his be in some slight degree shared with others, it is not with the society or the

representatives of the society, but with the Quarterly Conference; that is, with other ministers equally independent of them, and with exhorters, stewards, and class-leaders, none of whom are appointed by the Church, but chosen over it by the ministers."

"But their subjection is *voluntary*, is it not?" said the Rev Mr Stiptain "They are not *compelled* to this abject submission, as you seem to consider it. Their bishops and preachers rule by their free consent."

"So," replied Mr. Courtney, "is the subjection of the Roman Catholic to the Pope a voluntary subjection—in this and, at least. But he *must* submit, or *cease to be a Catholic*; and the Methodist *must* submit, or *cease to be a Methodist*. Your system, you will permit me to say, is A SYSTEM OF RULE for the ministry and *subjection* for the people. They may rebel. They may ask for the authority in God's word which demands that they should bow the neck to the clerical yoke. They may ask what Jesus meant when he said, 'Call no man on earth your master!' They may inquire who gave the bishop authority to lord it over the heritage of God. They may demand to know by what right the Discipline has taken the authority from the *Church*—the local society of faithful men—and given it to the ministers, the bishops, or the Conference; but if any one does this, he is liable to expulsion. He must, as a Methodist, be governed by the Discipline. Let any Church steadily refuse to receive the preacher sent by the bishop, or venture to employ one whom the bishop has not sent, or refuse to carry into execution any of the decrees of the Conference as contained in the Discipline, and you know she will not long be a part of the Methodist Church. If she does not *submit*, she goes out of the connection. This is all the compulsion, thank God, that *any* religious organization *can* employ in this land of freedom. But enough of this. I presume that you, sir, will not con

tend that a Methodist society is a local, independent organization, or that the Methodist Church is made up of such organizations; and we may, therefore, go on to our next mark."

"Which is," said Theodosia, "that a true Church *has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and submits, in matters of religion, to no authority but his.*

"Does the Methodist ecclesiastical establishment, whether we consider it as the collective whole, which is called 'the Church,' or as local congregations, called 'societies,' recognize any other *lawgiver* but Christ alone?"

"That question," said Mr. Percy, "resolves itself into this other, namely, Does she recognize the authority of the General Conference to make rules which she, as a Church, is bound to obey? Are her ministers and her societies at liberty to disregard and pass by the discipline ordained by the Conference, and go to the *Bible only* for instruction, in regard to Church affairs? I would be glad, sir," (addressing the presiding elder,) "if you could direct us to some reliable authority which would enable us to decide this question determinately before we go any farther."

"I can hardly suppose it necessary," replied the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "to remind you that Methodists go to the Bible for their faith and their practice. We appeal continually to the word of God, and it is our desire, in all things, to obey the Lord rather than men. For this we have been reviled. For this we have been persecuted. For this to-day our names are cast out as evil. No people have suffered more for conscience' sake than the poor, despised, and slandered Methodists."

"Then I understand you to say that you, as Methodists, *owe no obedience* to any law which was not enacted by Christ or the apostles, and which is not recorded in the word of God. So far, therefore, as the Discipline differs from the Scriptures, you are, as Methodists, under *no obligation* to obey its requirements, and, *refusing to obey*, would still be

retained in the connection, and permitted to enjoy all the privileges of other Methodists. I am glad to hear it; for I confess we had formed a different opinion concerning this matter. We had imagined that a Methodist *preacher* especially was bound to 'remember' and '*mind every point in the DISCIPLINE, great and small,*' whether he could find that point made out in the word of God or not; that he was not to '*mend the rules, but keep them,*' whether he could find them in the Bible or not. In *some* Churches they have a custom of giving the young preacher a *Bible* when he enters upon his work, with instructions to study *it*, and be governed by its teachings. We were under the impression that in yours 'the Annual Conference receives him as a probationer, by giving him the *form of DISCIPLINE*, inscribed thus: To A. B.: *You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer.*' (*Discipline*, chap. ii., sec. viii., ques. 1, ans. 3.) And that when you 'receive him into full connection, you do it by giving him another copy of the *DISCIPLINE*, inscribed thus: *As long as you freely consent to and earnestly endeavor to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer.*' (*Discip.*, chap. ii., sec. viii., ques. 3, ans. 1.) We thought you never asked him whether he *had studied the BIBLE or not*; but that you were careful to inquire if 'he had read the *form of DISCIPLINE*,' 'and was willing to conform to *it*;' 'if he knew the *rules of the society*, and of the *bands*, and if he conformed to *them*.' In short, it has been our impression, that it was made his duty to *obey the Discipline*, rather than the Bible. We are rejoiced to hear that it is not so. We are glad that every member and every minister is free to consult the Bible for himself, and only regard the *Discipline* so far as he finds its requirements enacted in the Bible."

"I wish, sir," exclaimed Mr. Courtney, "that all your min

isters and all your members could be made to understand it in this way. It might cause *some* of them to take the trouble to search the *Scriptures*, for those proof-texts on which the compilers of the Discipline rested its authority, and to which they have neglected to give us any reference. If they could *all* be induced to do this, with a firm determination to receive nothing as *binding* which they could not find *plainly put down in the Bible*, the system could not live a year. I would like, for example, to see them all begin to search for that text which confers the authority on your preachers to shut out from the Church those who give good evidence that they are true believers for six long months, (on the supposition that probationers are not members;) or to admit the unconverted seekers to Church-membership, on the supposition that they are. Of course, you believe there is *at least some ONE such text*, or else you could not consider this regulation of the *Discipline* as of any binding force. *If it has NO scriptural authority*, it must be null and void as a binding law upon the Church of Christ; and if *it is actually OPPOSED* to the scriptural law, then to enforce it, or obey it, is a *fearful sin* against God. It is organized, deliberate, systematic, and persistent *rebellion* against the express requirements of Him who alone has the right to make laws for his Church."

"That is strong language, sir," replied the Rev. Mr. Stip-tain, "to apply to the ministers and members of a Christian Church, which, I will venture to say, embodies as much of earnest piety, and gives evidence of as sincere love for the Saviour, and as much readiness to obey his will, as any body of people upon the earth."

"I know it is. I made use of strong language because the sense demands it. I mean *all* that I said; and neither you, nor any conscientious man, will venture to deny that *all* I said is strictly and literally true, according to the plain and natural meaning of the words. I would respectfully ask you

to say for yourself *whether it would not be* A FEARFUL SIN—an act of HIGH-HANDED REBELLION against Christ—for the ministers of his Church to take it upon themselves to admit people to Church-membership whom HE did *not* authorize them to admit, and to shut out those whom he required to be admitted. And if you have a right to shut a true believer out six months, you have the same right to shut him out sixteen months or sixty months. It devolves, then, on you, as a Methodist minister, to show *your authority*, not in the *Discipline*, but in the WORD OF GOD. Of course, you think you *have* such authority. Such good and pious people as the Methodists would not *knowingly* rebel against the laws of the King in Zion. I would like to see you look for it. With your permission, I would like to help you look for it *now*! Here is the Bible. Will you point me to the text which is relied upon by Methodists as their authority for this law of the Discipline?"

So saying, Mr. Courtney handed him the Bible, and all waited for him to open it, and find the text.

"The makers of the Discipline," replied the Elder, without opening the Bible, "did not see fit to encumber it with references to the chapter and verse which contained what they considered the authority for each of its provisions, and consequently different persons might now rely upon different texts—some upon one and some upon another. Upon what texts the greatest number of Methodists would rely I do not know."

"Well, I will be very easily satisfied: I only ask for *some one* upon which *any* of the Methodists can rely. I only ask for *one command* to admit the unconverted, or *one command* to shut out for six months the converted, who desire admission; or, in case that cannot be found, I only ask for *one example* in which saint or sinner, seeker or believer, was, by the apostles, admitted on six months' probation. I only ask

for *one mention of or one allusion* to a Christian Church, in which a part of the members were *probationers* and a part were *full members*."

"Why, sir," exclaimed the Elder's lady, "I can give you an example of the admission of *three thousand* members *before they had professed conversion*. The Pentecostal penitents were *only convicted*. They were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Now, Brother Gorrie, in his History of Methodism, page 172, says, 'It is evident that these persons were not believers in the sense of being regenerate, unless regenerating faith precedes repentance for sin; for they were first to repent, and then to be baptized, for, that is, *in order to* the remission of sins, and thirdly, as the result of such repentance and baptism, they were taught to expect the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Now, if Peter received the inquiring penitent, and baptized him into the Church to make him a Christian, why cannot we? We ask the sinner who desires salvation, to come into the Church and find it in the use of the sacraments, and the other means of grace; but if he does not find it in six months, we take it for granted that he is not in earnest, and so send him away unless he feels that he would like to try for six months longer."

"I wonder," said Theodosia, to herself, "if she could not show us how many of these three thousand *were dropped* by Peter's *class-leader* at the end of six months; and how many were recommended by him for full membership?" But she was too polite to speak her thoughts aloud, and Mr. Courtney simply replied:

"The passage you refer to, madam, is itself convincing evidence that *true* repentance and a saving faith always go together; for although Peter commanded them to repent and be baptized. *he did not baptize or receive into the Church any except those 'who gladly received the word;*

and the *glad* reception of the word supposes *faith* in the word. Peter did *not* receive them as mere anxious, convicted sinners, *inquiring* what they must do—as your Church does. They were already serious; already anxious; already *inquiring* most earnestly; already they were *crying out* as most determined *seekers*. But this was not enough. They must not only be *convicted of sin*, they must also *repent of sin*, and true *repentance* implies true conversion, and necessarily implies true faith either as preceding or accompanying it. For salvation is again and again promised to the *penitent*, and yet the Lord expressly says, ‘He that *believeth not* shall be damned.’

“But the question before us now is not whether Peter received unregenerate sinners and made them Christians by baptism, but whether he received them or any one *on six months’ probation*? with the understanding that, if all parties were not satisfied, they might quietly withdraw or as quietly ‘*be dropped*’ at the end of that time.

“But still that people were not, as sinners, taken into the Church by the apostles to be regenerated *there*, and made the children of God and the heirs of glory by some *Church ceremony*, but were added to the Church because they gave evidence that they were *already converted, regenerated, and saved*, you may learn from the last verse of the same chapter to which you referred, (Acts xi.) where you read, ‘The Lord added *daily* unto the Church,’ not *seekers*, not *probationers*, but ‘such as should be saved,’ which reads in the original simply ‘*the saved*.’ They were first made *safe* by faith in Christ, and then admitted to the privileges of the Church, because they were already of the number of the saved, and not in order that they might become such. As these were added *daily*, of course it did not *then* require *six months* to get into the Church, and if any such regulation

was ever made by the apostles, it must have been made after this.

“If we go to Samaria, and read that the multitudes of men and women believed and were baptized at once, we may be sure that there was no six months’ probation there. Nor do we hear of any thing of the kind at Antioch, or at Corinth, or at Ephesus, or at any place where any Church is mentioned in the Scriptures. Peter did not receive Cornelius on probation; Philip did not receive the eunuch on probation; Paul did not receive Lydia on probation; nor did he receive the jailer on probation. So soon as they gave evidence of *faith* in Christ, they were admitted at once to *full* membership, and until they *had* done this, none were admitted to membership at all.

“Now, madam, your good husband here thinks that, as a Methodist, neither he nor the bishops above him, nor the preachers below him, are bound by any law of the Discipline which is not based upon the word of God. I hope you will persuade him, therefore, never again to sanction the admission of a mere *seeker* to Church privileges as a probationer, and at once to admit every applicant who gives evidence of *real faith* to *full* membership. Though, if he should determine thus to obey the Bible rather than the Discipline, I foresee that it will cost him not only his eldership, but his *membership*. He *cannot do it and stay in the Methodist Church*; and no one knows that fact better than he does himself.”

“Of course, sir, I would not *desire* to remain in the Methodist Church unless I could conscientiously agree with it in doctrine, and conform to its rules. Every voluntary association has a right to determine for itself the terms of its membership, and require of those who come into it of their *own* accord that they shall continue to conform to its rules.’

"No, sir; I ask your pardon for seeming to contradict your assertion. But the Church of Jesus Christ has *no authority* to make or mend the terms of admission or of continuance in her membership. They were made for her by her Lord; she was constituted upon *his* terms, and must be always governed by them. If any association called a Church has made *other terms of admission* than those which HE made, it is certainly not *his Church*, for into *his Church* *all his people* may surely come upon HIS terms.

"But, sir, this is only *one point* in regard to which you are bound to obey the Discipline rather than the Bible, the Conference rather than the Lord Jesus. Will you permit me to call your attention to another?"

"Certainly, and with great pleasure; I love to hear you talk. It is a satisfaction to know just what you Baptists think of us. I have never heard it told so freely before. I hope you will keep back nothing that is in your heart, for, if I am not self-deceived, I sincerely desire to know and to obey the truth."

"Then you will not get angry with me, sir, if I ask you to show me in the Scripture some authority for making *attendance upon the class-meeting* a condition of *continuance* in the Church, even after admission to full membership. Observe, it is not the institution of the class-meeting that I speak of, but the making attendance on it a condition of *Church-membership*. Did the Lord Jesus, by himself or his apostles, at any time or at any place enact *this* as a condition of membership in HIS Church? Did he or they ever by precept or example authorize you to drive one of his children out of HIS Church *for not attending class*? That the Discipline not only authorizes but *requires* you to do so, you will see by turning to chapter iv., section 3:

"'QUESTION 1. What shall we do with those members of our Church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?'"

“ANSWER 1. Let an elder, deacon, or one of the preachers visit them whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect—namely, exclusion.’

“‘2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit, or station, bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect, by the decision of a majority of the members before whom the case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for a breach of *our rules*, and not for immoral conduct.’”

“Yes, sir, you quote it correctly; you seem to know our rules almost as well as though you had been yourself a Methodist. And I will candidly state, for the information of your friends, that we are accustomed to enforce the rule wherever occasion may require; and have ever found it a most essential part of our Church discipline. If a member wilfully and pertinaciously neglects ‘*class*,’ he makes, as a general rule, a miserably poor Methodist; we have but little use for him.”

“But the question with us just now is this: You say that, as a Methodist, neither you nor your members are bound to obey any law but that of Christ; and yet you say one cannot be permitted to remain in your Church who does not obey this law, which requires weekly attendance on the class-meeting. It follows, therefore, either that you are utterly mistaken in regard to the matter, or else that Christ Jesus, by himself or his apostles, instituted the class-meeting, and made regular attendance on it a condition of membership in *his Church*. If he did not, then you have made for *your Church* different terms of membership from those which he made for *his*; and *your Church*, consequently, must be one thing, and *HIS Church* another, and in one respect, at least, a very different thing

"It is certain you make this a term of membership. It is certain that one cannot wilfully refuse or neglect to attend *class*,' and not be subject to exclusion from the Church; and the only question that remains for us to settle is, whether class-meetings were ordained by Christ, and regular attendance on them made essential to Church-membership."

"If it will relieve your mind of any anxiety upon that subject," replied the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "I will candidly confess to you that we, as Methodists, have never pretended that the institution of the class was of Divine authority. Our writers have again and again declared that it originated in a suggestion made by Captain Foy, one of the early converts to Methodism, and adopted from him by the venerable Wesley. Our brother, J. Miley, in his work called '*Class-meetings*,' expressly says, that 'we regard our class-meetings simply as a prudential regulation. Mr. Wesley himself so regarded and styled them. They are a usage which our Church has herself instituted.' P. 73.

"So, also, our Brother Charles Key, in his '*Class-leaders' Manual*,' declares very plainly that 'it is not contended that this institution is of Divine appointment, or that in the specific form in which it prevails among Methodists, it had any existence in the primitive Church.' P. 19.

"Our Brother Gorrie, in his excellent '*History of Methodism as it was and is*,' says, 'that the question whether Mr. Wesley ever designed to establish class-meetings as a term or condition of Church-membership, is a question which has not been largely discussed nor finally settled.' Nor does it seem now of any consequence what Mr. Wesley designed. It certainly *is* a condition of membership, whether he designed it to be so or not; and we contend for it simply on the ground of its utility and necessity to the purity and prosperity of our Churches."

"But what authority have you to make it a *condition*

of membership, when Christ did not require it?" asked Theodosia.

"Those who become Methodists, madam, know our rules, and by uniting with us they agree to conform to them, and have no cause of complaint if they refuse and are expelled."

"If you claimed to be no more than a mere *human society*," said Mr. Courtney, "like the Sons of Temperance, or the Free-Masons, or Odd-Fellows, you would certainly have the right to fix your own terms of membership, and those who did not choose to conform to them might stand aside. But you claim to be *the Church of Christ and of God*. The law of Christ requires all his people to unite with *his Church*, and requires his Church to receive and retain them on certain conditions established by *himself*. HE HAS DETERMINED *what qualifications shall entitle them to admittance, and for what disqualifications they shall be expelled*. But you seem to feel that you are wiser than your Master, and not only venture to make new terms and times of admission, but new conditions of continuance. You may call this wisdom; you may excuse it by saying that it is, in your opinion, for the good of the Church. But Christ will say to you, as you do to your preachers, '*Do not mend MY rules, but keep them.*' You can never better the plans which Infinite Wisdom devised, and to add to or take from HIS conditions of membership in his Church, is wicked *rebellion* against the authority of the King. If your Church is the Church of Christ, then, when your Conference changes the conditions of membership, it changes the conditions of membership in the *Church of Christ*—the conditions which Christ himself established. It sets itself *above* the King. It claims the authority to undo what Christ has done in his own Church. It abrogates and nullifies the law of Christ. It may have done it with the best *intentions*, but it is no less rebellion for all that. My overseer who *disobeys my positive orders*, and causes my servants to do so

may plead that *he* thought my orders were unwise or imperfect, and that he was sure my interests would be best promoted by his arrangements. But it is no less *disobedience* on this account. It is his business to *obey*, and he must take it for granted that I am competent to take care of my own interests, and know what it is that I desire to have done.

"You may *think* you are wiser than your Master; you may think you are more competent to decide upon the terms of membership in his Church than he was himself; and so you may honestly endeavor to mend his plan and improve upon his requirements; but when you do it you reject his authority, you *rebel* against his government, nay, you usurp to yourselves the prerogatives of the Lawgiver, and put yourselves in the place of God."

"But has not Christ," asked Mrs. Stiptain, "given a certain liberty to his ministers to change and modify the unessential rites and ceremonies of his Church at their discretion?"

"I think not, madam; but if he had, these things, which determine the very right to membership, do not belong to unessential rites and ceremonies. They are vital to the very existence of the Church. Whatever Christ may have left undetermined concerning his Church, it is certain he did *not* leave undetermined the terms of admission or the conditions of membership. These were fixed and positive. These must be at all times and everywhere the same.

"If his ministers have a right to *add one condition*, they have equal right to add ten. If they may require attendance on 'class' once a week, they may, with equal propriety, require confession to the minister once a week, or the reading of a certain chapter of the Discipline once a week, or the taking of the Christian Advocate and Journal, or the observance of every Friday as a fast-day. And if they may *add* any new conditions, so they may change or dispense with the old. They may dispense with the profession of faith, and not only

change the act of baptism but dispense with it, or any substitute for it, altogether. If they may change the terms of admission and the conditions of membership *once*, they may do it twice, or thrice, or seven times, or seventy times seven. To-day they may admit one class of people, and to-morrow declare them ineligible. To-day they may permit a portion of their members to enjoy all the privileges of the Church unconscious of any wrong, and to-morrow may pass a law that shall cast them out into the world and deliver them over unto Satan."

"But you cannot suppose, sir," replied the lady, "that there is the slightest probability that the *Methodist Church* would thus arbitrarily trifle with the privileges of her members."

"If you will promise, madam, that you and your good husband will not get angry with me for my plainness of speech, I will engage to *prove* to you that they *have done it* again and again. I will show you from the different editions of your own Discipline that you *have* changed the terms of admission, or the conditions of membership, at least half a dozen times already, in the few years of your existence as a Church."

"I am sure, sir, our curiosity itself will keep us in a good humor."

"Certainly," exclaimed her husband, "we will be very much obliged to Mr. Courtney for any information which he may be able to give us concerning the history of the Methodist Church; and as for his plainness of speech, we have already given him full proof that we are not offended by it. The truth is, I *enjoy* it: I *love* to hear a man speak right out all that is in his heart."

"Then," continued Mr. Courtney, "I will go on to talk freely. I know I am sometimes blunt, nay, almost rude of speech, and I thank you for your good-natured endurance of

the hard things (as they may seem to you) which conscience requires me to say."

"Never mind apologies, Mr. Courtney, go on with your argument."

"Well, sir, your Church, *as a Church*, dates its existence from Baltimore, Maryland, about Christmas of the year seventeen hundred and eighty-four; it is yet, therefore, much less than a hundred years old. It was created then and there by sixty preachers, who say in the Minutes of the Conference published in 1785, "At this Conference it was unanimously agreed that circumstances made it expedient for us to become a separate body, under the denomination of the 'Methodist Episcopal Church.' And again they say, 'We formed ourselves into an independent Church.' From this time, therefore, I will count the changes. If you claim an earlier origin, and will permit me to go back to what in your Discipline is called 'the Rise of Methodism,' in 1729, I will find many others. But as you did not *claim* to be a *Church of Christ* until 1784, I think it fair to make that our starting-point.

"Now here is a little book of 364 pages, published by Lane & Scott, No. 200 Mulberry street, New York, in 1851, styled the '*History of the Discipline, by Robert Emory*,' who was, as I learn from the preface, himself a Methodist, and a Methodist minister, and who has certainly made a most valuable contribution to the literature of your denomination. That our friends here may understand precisely the character of the work, and see how much reliance should be placed upon its statements, I will read to you a portion of the

" 'PREFACE.

" 'When a young Methodist preacher enters, in accordance with the requirements of the direction of his Church, upon the study of its Discipline, he is curious to know when and by whom that Discipline was framed. He learns, indeed, from

the book itself, that the General Conference has "full powers to make rules and regulations," under certain "limitations and restrictions;" but who imposed those "limitations and restrictions," and to what extent has the General Conference used its powers? There is internal evidence that the present Discipline was not composed at one time. At what periods, then, were its several parts introduced, and what modifications have they undergone? These are points not only of curious inquiry, but essential often to right interpretation; but they are points on which students, generally, can obtain no satisfactory information. In our civil governments the statutes are scattered through the several volumes of laws which have been published from time to time, and therefore these are all preserved; but in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Discipline, as revised at each General Conference, being in itself complete, supplants all that had gone before it, and the previous editions are cast aside as of no further use. This has continued until now nearly sixty years have elapsed since the organization of the Church, and the Discipline has undergone about twenty distinct revisions. Where, then, shall the student go to find these successive editions? If he resort to the libraries of the oldest preachers, they are not there: to the library of the Book Concern, they are not there: to the archives of the General Conference, still they are not to be found. Despairing of success in this pursuit, he may, perhaps, examine the Journals of the General Conference, (though, from the nature of the case, this is a privilege which few can enjoy;) but here he will find that all prior to 1800 are missing, and that those subsequent to that date convey no accurate information as to the changes in the Discipline; because in the alterations references are made to the chapter, section, question, page, etc. which cannot be understood without having a copy of the then Discipline in hand. And, moreover, because at each General Conference the subsequent publication of the Discipline is

intrusted to a committee invested with powers (often largely discretionary) as to the selection, arrangement, and wording of the several parts; and no report of their proceedings is entered on the journal.

“The embarrassment which is here supposed in the mind of the student of the Discipline, is precisely such as the author himself experienced. In such a dilemma he endeavored to collect for himself a set of the different Disciplines. Having his lot cast amid the earliest seats of Methodism in this country, he had the good fortune of rescuing one old Discipline after another from its obscure resting-place, until at length, with one exception, the series was completed, and the rich gratification was enjoyed of tracing, in the original documents themselves, the progress of the Discipline from the first simple series of questions and answers to its present more elaborate structure of parts, chapters, and sections. The collection thus made could not be rendered universally accessible. The author has thought, therefore, that he would be doing a service to students of the Discipline generally, and especially to his brethren in the ministry, by publishing the results of his investigations in a condensed form. Such was the origin of the present work. In the preparation of it the author has aimed at nothing more than the most perfect accuracy in the statement of facts, and the most lucid arrangement which the nature of the case admitted. . . . The changes in the form and arrangement of the Discipline are noticed in the first book, and in the second, the changes in its contents. That these last might be stated as precisely as possible, *the very words of the Discipline are quoted.*”

“You see, therefore,” said Mr. Courtney, looking up from the book, “that we have here the very words of the Discipline, quoted by a Methodist minister for the instruction of his own brethren, and showing precisely what changes have from time to time been made. I propose to follow up these changes

only so far as they modify the terms of admission into the Church, and the conditions of membership after admission.

"Let us now turn to page 26, and examine the Discipline of 1784, which was the first. And here at the very beginning is an announcement which shows how little the authority of Christ was regarded, and proves that though it was now to be called a Church of Christ, it was as much as ever the Church of Wesley.

"*QUESTION 2. What can be done in order to the future union of the Methodists?*

"*ANSWER. During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, READY, IN MATTERS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS.'*

"This neglect of all reference to the word of God or the authority of Christ, was in perfect harmony with the action of the first Conference held in America, some eleven years before. (See page 9.) 'The Methodist societies were originally governed by the General Rules drawn up by the Wesleys in 1743, and by the regulations adopted in the Conferences which were held yearly from 1744. These regulations were first published in the Minutes from year to year. They were afterwards collected together and printed, with some slight alterations, in a tract entitled "The Large Minutes." The same rules and regulations, so far as applicable to their condition, governed the Methodist societies in America from the time of their first formation, in 1766. *At the first Conference in 1773, the preachers formally recognized "the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists," as contained in the English Minutes, to be "the SOLE rule of their conduct."*' (Ans. to quest. 2, page 10.)

"So, in determining their form of government, they made no reference to the Scripture, but say that, '*Following the counsel of John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal form we thought it best to become an episcopal Church*'

"But this is nothing to our present purpose. We want the changes in the terms of admission, and conditions of membership. And, first, it appears on page 17, that those coming into the society were to be received only after *three months'* probation; but as soon as *the Church* was formed she changed this law; and on page 35 we read, 'How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating into the society? Ans. Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least *two months.*' *This was all that was requisite for Church-membership for the first five years.* Any one could be a member without further ceremony if the leader certified to his good conduct for *two months*, and the *preacher* would receive him. There was no *baptism*, no *profession of faith*, no examination before the society—nothing at all but the *two months'* probation; but in 1789, the Conference decreed that they must wait four months longer, and the probation was lengthened to *six months*, where it now stands; but still there was *no baptism*, no *profession*, no examination before the society. No one was consulted but the preacher, and he decided on the recommendation of the *leader* after six months' probation in the observance of the *rules*; and these rules, though they require strict morality, and the observance of external religious *forms*, say not a word about true repentance towards God, or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Surely, Mr. Courtney, you must misunderstand the writer. He cannot mean to say that the Methodist Church admitted members without *baptism*, or any profession of faith, for five years."

"Yes, madam, it did so—not for five years only, but FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS. It extended the probation at the end of five years; but it was not till *fifty-two* years after its organization at Baltimore, in 1784—not until 1836, that baptism was required as a term of membership. This doubtless seems very strange to you. It is *strange*, even to astonishment; but

it is, nevertheless, most woefully true. Here is the book; you can read it for yourself. (P. 182.)”

“‘1836. *It was now made a requisite for admission into the Church that the candidates have been baptized.*’”

“If it had been a requisite before, how could it then, in 1836, have been ‘made a requisite?’

“So, you see, for fifty-two years the Methodist Church required, as terms of membership, only the two months’ probation for the first five years, and the six months for the other thirty-seven years; but during all the time, *no baptism and no profession*. And it was not until 1840, four years after *baptism* had been made a term of admission, that any profession of faith was required; for you may read on the same page, 182 :

“‘1840. The following was added to the requisites for admission into the Church :

“‘And shall, on examination by the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances, both of the correctness of their faith and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church.’

“Now, without inquiring any further, we have *three times* seen a fundamental change in the conditions on which members could be *received*. How many more they may have made we need not now take time to examine. I will, however, call your attention to at least one more, which you will find on page 44, sec. 5 : ‘*No person holding slaves shall in future be admitted into society or to the Lord’s Supper, [they would not even admit him on probation,] till he previously complies with these rules.*’ That is, the rules which we shall presently give at length, and which positively require the emancipation of the slaves, whether they desire it or not. This rule was suspended the next year after it was made, (see page 80,) but was not repealed till twelve years afterwards, when it was enacted that ‘No slaveholder should be received into *society*

all the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit has spoken to him freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery.' (Page 275.) It does not appear what the preacher was to say, nor whether it was necessary that what he said should have any particular effect on the slaveholder's mind or conduct. But he could not come in till he had been talked to.

"But now, let us look at the conditions of *continuance* in the Church after members have actually been admitted. How many times these have been changed I cannot positively say; but I am sure I can point you to more than you would believe except upon the testimony of your own brother minister.

"In the first Discipline, adopted in 1784, we have already seen that to *become* a member, it was necessary to have been two months on trial; but now, what was required to *remain* a member? It would seem, from page 37, that members '*must not marry unbelievers or unawakened persons.*' 'Question 21. What can be done to put a stop to this? Answer. Let every preacher publicly enforce the apostle's caution: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." 2. Let him openly declare that *whoever does this will be expelled from the society,*' etc.

"So here, at first, the penalty was expulsion; but, in 1804, (see page 187,) 'the punishment for violating the rule was changed from expulsion to putting back on trial for six months.' And after thirty-two years more, the penalty was, in 1836, (see page 188,) 'entirely done away with.' So, what was a sin demanding expulsion, was so much *less* sinful after twenty years, that it only required a second probation to atone for it; and after thirty-two years longer, had ceased to be a sin at all deserving punishment. She who married an *unawakened* man for her first husband, must have been expelled; and for marrying the second of the same sort, put back upon probation; and for marrying the third of the same sort *had*

she lived long enough to do so, would have not even been reproved. Surely men are wiser than their Master! But excuse me; I will show you another of these changes in the condition of membership.

"Let us now turn to page 43 of this valuable book, and see what were the *rules* adopted by *the Church*, at the time of its organization, *on the subject of slavery*, and see if we can ascertain how many times slaveholding was and was not made a condition of expulsion. We have already seen how it affected the terms of *admission*; we wish now to inquire how it operated on those of continuance. I will read:

"Question 42. What methods can we take to extirpate slavery?

"Answer. We are deeply conscious of the impropriety of making *new terms of communion* for a religious society already established, excepting on the most pressing occasion; and such we esteem the practice of holding our fellow-creatures in slavery. We view it as contrary to the golden law of God, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in a more abject slavery than is to be found in any part of the world, except America, so many souls that are capable of the image of God.

"We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us, and for that purpose we *add the following to the rules of our society, namely*:

"1. Every member of our society who has slaves in his possession, shall, within twelve months after notice given to him by the assistant, (which notice the assistants are required immediately and without any delay to give in their respective circuits,) legally execute and record an instrument whereby he emancipates and sets free every slave in his possession who

is between the ages of forty and forty-five, immediately, or, at farthest, when they arrive at the age of forty-five.

“‘And every slave who is between the ages of twenty-five and forty, immediately, or, at farthest, at the expiration of five years from the date of the said instrument And every slave who is between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, immediately, or, at farthest, when they arrive at the age of thirty. And every slave under the age of twenty, as soon as they arrive at the age of twenty-five at farthest. And every infant born in slavery, after the above-mentioned rules are complied with, immediately on its birth.

“‘2. Every assistant shall keep a journal, in which he shall regularly minute down the names and ages of all the slaves belonging to all the masters in his respective circuit, and also the date of every instrument executed and recorded for the manumission of the slaves, with the name of the court, book, and folio, in which the said instruments respectively shall have been recorded; which journal shall be handed down in each circuit to the succeeding assistants.

“‘3. In consideration *that these rules form a new term of communion*, every person concerned who will not comply with them, shall have the liberty quietly to withdraw himself from our society within the twelve months succeeding the notice given as aforesaid, *otherwise the assistant shall exclude him from the society.*

“‘4. No person, so voluntarily withdrawn or excluded, *shall ever partake of the Supper of the Lord* with the Methodists, till he complies with the above requisitions.

“‘5. No person holding slaves shall in future be admitted into society, or to the Lord’s Supper, till he previously complies with these rules concerning slavery.

“‘N. B. These rules are to affect the members of our society no further than they are consistent with the laws of the States in which they reside. [That is, if the instrument

of emancipation could not be legally made and recorded, and would be of no binding force, it need not be done.]

“‘And respecting our brethren in Virginia that are concerned, and after due consideration of their peculiar circumstances, we allow them two years from the notice given to consider the expedience of compliance with or non-compliance with these rules.’

“Now did ever the veriest despot of any nation on the globe use language more peremptory than this? ‘Every member who has slaves *shall* legally execute and record,’ etc.; and, to be sure that the order is obeyed, the circuit-rider, as provost-marshal, is to keep a book with every name recorded; and, if they do not comply within the year, must cast them out—except the dear brethren in *Virginia*, who, I suppose, had no chance to hide behind the *State* laws, and they are graciously ‘*allowed*’ to live in sin *two* years instead of one.

“But it is not for the arrogance, or folly, or unscripturalness of the law that I called your attention to it; but to show you that they themselves *openly avowed* and fearlessly *exercised* the right to legislate for the Church of Christ, even to the extent of making *new terms of communion*, which Christ or his apostles never thought of making, and which they themselves presently receded from.

“I would like to have been present when the ‘assistant’ started round his circuit, with copies of the law and the slave-book in his hand, to make his ‘record.’ He comes to the house of a good old Virginia planter, who loves his servants, and who loves his Saviour, and has long been a member of ‘the society.’

“‘My dear brother,’ says the ‘assistant,’ ‘I suppose you are aware that we are now no longer societies, but a *Church of Jesus Christ*.’

“‘Yes, I have heard so, and think it a very good plan.’

“‘I have called in to get the names and ages of your *ser*

Deems. You know WE passed a law that you must set them free so soon as they arrive at certain ages, specified in the document, a copy of which I now present you for your instruction.'

" 'You passed a law commanding me to free my slaves!'

" 'Yes, sir; and if you don't promptly comply, I am positively instructed to *excommunicate you from the Church*, unless you will quietly *withdraw*, which you are at liberty to do if you see fit. Moreover, it is by this law made my duty to take down the names and ages of all the slaves belonging to all the masters in my circuit; so, as I am in haste this morning, you will please furnish me the catalogue at once.'

"So saying, he draws up to a table, opens his book, gets out his pen and pocket inkstand.

" 'Now, sir, if you please, I am ready. Begin with the oldest, and let me have names and ages in regular order, down to the infants; and, remember, those born hereafter are born free; for so WE have determined it.'

" 'WE? whom do you mean by WE?'

" 'The Conference, sir, consisting of the travelling preachers and bishops.'

" 'My dear brother, you know I have always been a consistent Methodist?'

" 'Yes, Brother A., I can certify to that.'

" 'And you had no fault to find with me until you passed this law, which could justify my exclusion from the Church?'

" 'Certainly not; nor have we now, if you will comply with our demands, and promptly free your slaves.'

" 'But my slaves and I have grown up together. I received them from my parents, and feel bound to care for them; and I conscientiously believe I can do more for their temporal and spiritual good, as slaves, bound to obey me, than I could if they were turned loose to prey upon society, as, like a set of lazy vagabonds, they would be sure to do. For

a slave's idea of freedom, you know, is mere release from ~~any~~ obligation to labor.'

"I cannot help what your conscientious convictions may be; OUR *law* must be obeyed, or you must leave *the Church*—quietly, if you will, forcibly if we must.'

"But, my dear brother, my slaves will most of them prefer to stay in their present condition. They are not only better off than "*free negroes*," but they have the sense to know it. You may go out and ask them, one by one; and if you can find any that are willing to leave their old master, you may take them with you, and let the Conference provide for their wants, temporal and spiritual, as faithfully as I have.'

"It does not matter, sir, whether they desire freedom or not; or whether they would be worse or better off by being free. You must set them free, or leave *our Church*; for *so WE have decreed*.'

"Well, my dear brother, this takes me somewhat suddenly, and I would like to think about it.'

"Certainly, we give slaveholders in other States only a year, but to *Virginians* we allow *two* years, during which you may consider, and *withdraw* if you don't choose to comply with our law, or be excommunicated.'

"O, I don't want two years, I only want just time enough to *search the Scriptures*. I understand that the Methodist Church is the *Church of Christ*. Is that not so?'

"Certainly, we are the Church of Christ and of God.'

"But I have somehow gotten hold of the idea that Christ himself was the author of the laws of HIS Church. I am an old man, and may be old-fashioned in my opinions, but I don't exactly feel that I am bound by *your law*, though I am entirely willing to submit to the authority of *Christ*. Did you find in *the Bible* that slaveholders could not be members of *Christ's Church*? You are in a great hurry, I know, but please take a *few* minutes to show me the *texts*. I was a

master, and had been for years, when it pleased God to convert my soul and make me a Christian. I very naturally went to the *Bible* to learn my duty as a master: I don't see where else I could have gone. I read there that I must treat my servants kindly and justly, and *this*, you know, I have always tried to do. But I did not see any thing which seemed to contemplate the dissolution of the relation of master and servant, or, as it is in the original, master and slave. On the contrary, I found that the Christians who were slaves were to be *obedient* to their masters, and to do them good and faithful service; and especially *they that have believing masters.*'

"'But, brother, you know *the Conference has made the law, and the Churches must obey.*'

"'But what if I choose to obey God rather than the Conference? What if I deny the right of Conference to compel me to free my servants? What if I ask them to read the language of Paul to Timothy, sixth chapter, first and second verses: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed; and they that have *believing* masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful [literally, "*believing*"] and beloved, partakers of the benefit." *Paul* said if any man taught otherwise than this, (verse 3,) "he is proud, [or, literally, *a fool*,] knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words," etc. What if I say that not only Paul but Peter recognizes the relation of masters and servants among Christian people and Church members, just as plainly as he does that of husbands and wives? What if I ask them to show me where Jesus ever sent *his* ministers out with a book under their arm to take an inventory of his people's slaves, so that the Church might know if they were freed; or where Peter, or Paul, or John, or James, or any other apostle, made the manumission

of slaves a prerequisite to *communion with the Church of Christ.*'

"O, as to that, we grant that it is a *new term of communion*, not made by *Christ* or the *apostles*. We expressly state in the law itself that it is *new*, and express our regret at the necessity for its enactment.'

"Then what if I respectfully decline to acquiesce in your *new terms of membership*, and prefer to be governed by the old law of Christ?"

"Then, sir, after two years you can no longer commune with the Methodists; and if you lived in any other State but Virginia, we would turn you out in *one* year. You may be thankful, sir, that you live in Virginia.'

"I wonder," said the Planter, musingly, "how it happened that Paul forgot, when writing to Philemon about his slave Onesimus, to tell him that if he did not file a deed of manumission in the county clerk's office within one year, or in two years at most, he would be excommunicated from the Church, unless he saw fit in the meantime quietly to withdraw, and go back among the wicked people of the world."

"Perhaps the Assistant found too many who preferred excommunication to obedience; for though the law was put forth with so much force of words, the next Conference resolved to *suspend* its execution for *the present*, and the matter stood thus for over ten years, when the Conference declared that they *were more than ever convinced of the great evil* of the African slavery which yet exists in the United States, and decreed as follows. Here is the law already referred to requiring the slaveholder to *be talked to* :

"No slaveholder shall be received into society till the preacher who has the oversight of the Church has spoken to him freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery.'

"It seems that after being *told* of the sin, he might bring it with him into the Church, and keep it there if he saw fit

But slaveholders could not occupy *official* stations in the Church without giving security for the emancipation of their slaves so soon as the laws of the State would permit; and if any member *sold* a slave, he was *to be excluded*. If any one bought a slave, he was to execute a writing to set him free at the expiration of a time fixed by the Quarterly Conference, *or be excluded*.

"In 1804, the Conference passed an ~~act~~ declaring that 'the members of our societies in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee *shall be exempted from these rules*.' So that what in *other* States was so great a sin as to *exclude men from the Church* of Christ, was in *these four* favored States *no sin at all*, or at least none that required the attention of the Church of Christ.

"This law was changed again in 1808, so as to permit and authorize each of the *Annual Conferences* to make their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves.

"And in 1820 this was repealed, and other enactments made, which have since been remodelled again, until the chapter on slavery as it now stands in the Discipline was ordained. When the Conference North or South will see fit to enact some *other new terms of membership* in relation to this subject, no one can tell."

"Let us thank God," exclaimed Mr. Percy, "that the terms of communion in the true Church were made by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and must be always what they have ever been. The Church that changes them is not a Church of Christ. But what has all this long story about slavery to do with our investigation?"

"I introduced it," said Mr. Courtney, "merely as *one of many instances* in which the Conference has claimed and exercised the right to *make laws* and change laws for the Church, affecting even the right to membership, and in which

the Church had recognized its right, and thus I show *that she has OTHER lawgivers* besides Christ.

"I might have showed you this from her changes of her laws concerning baptism. In her *first* Discipline the Conference said, 'Let every adult person and the parents of every child to be baptized have their choice either of immersion or sprinkling,' [nothing said of pouring,] and let the elder or deacon conduct himself accordingly.

"Some years after this, in 1786, it was decreed that *pouring* also might be used; and the same authority that left out *pouring* at first, may, if pouring be a mode of baptism, with equal propriety leave out *immersion* at the next meeting.

"In their first Discipline a law was made *authorizing* and *requiring* the *rebaptism* of certain persons, but *now* you have no such law.

"Question 46. What shall be done with those who were baptized in infancy, but now have scruples concerning the validity of infant baptism?

"Answer. Remove their scruples by argument if you can; if not, the office may be performed by immersion or sprinkling, as the person desires.'

"In 1786 this was repealed; so that if a Methodist preacher should *now* venture to be an Anabaptist, [rebaptizer,] he does it on his own responsibility, and without authority of either the word of God or the *Discipline*.

"But why need we delay upon the application of our test? The Roman Catholic Church itself is not more abjectly subject to the popes and councils than is the Methodist Episcopal Church to the bishops and Conferences. In fact, in almost every essential feature of their *organization* there is a remarkable resemblance between the two."

"I have," said Mr Percy, "been struck with that fact ~~as~~

we have gone along, and have amused myself by drawing a parallel between them, thus :

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

1. Its government is *episcopal*, or the rule of *bishops*.

2. Its laws are made for it by the popes and councils.

3. Its laws are executed by the agency of the priests

4. The people have no share in the making or the execution of their laws.

5. The pope is elected by the cardinals.

6. The pope sends the priests to any congregation he sees fit.

7. The people must have the priest that is set over them, or none.

8. The people have no voice in determining who shall be received as members. It is decided by the priest

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

1. Its government is *episcopal*. It is ruled by bishops.

2. Its laws are made for it by the bishops and Conferences.

3. Its laws are executed by the preachers.

4. The people have nothing to do with the making or the execution of their laws.

5. The bishop is elected by the preachers.

6. The bishop sends the preachers to any appointment that pleases him.

7. The society must receive the preacher sent by the bishop, or have none.

8. The people have no voice in deciding who shall be received as members. It is done for them by the class-leader and the preacher. For although since 1840 there is an examination in the presence of the society of the candidate for *full* membership, he must have been *recommended* by the *leader*, and it is the preacher who *decides* whether the examination is satisfactory, and receives him."

"Well, I declare," exclaimed the Methodist lady, "we ought to be obliged to you for your good opinion of us. I have always understood that we did not stand *very* high in the estimation of Baptists, but had no idea before that you

counted our bishops no better than the pope, and our people no better than Roman Catholics."

"Excuse me, madam, but I neither said nor meant any such thing. I say nothing at all of the *personal* goodness or badness of your bishops or your people. They may be, and I have no doubt many of them are, devotedly pious, self-denying men. It is not the *personal character* of your ministers or members that I am speaking of, but of the *constitutional* character of that *organization* called the '*Methodist Episcopal CHURCH*.' And of *that* I do say, and I wish that every Methodist in all the land could hear me say, and would by hearing be led to examine into the subject, and see for himself if I do not tell the simple truth when I say that in these eight particulars, at least, it is remarkably similar to that of the Roman Antichrist, the MAN of SIN and SON of PERDITION

"I might extend the parallel much farther, but I have confined it to the point we are now investigating, that is, whether the Methodist societies, as such, *have any other lawgiver but Christ, and are obliged to submit to any other government than his*."

"I think, sir," said the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "that you rather exceeded your authorities when you added your *last* item to the parallel which you arranged with so much lawyer-like ingenuity. The testimony, sir, will not sustain *that* allegation, whatever may be the case with the other seven. Look at the Discipline, sir: you cannot surely be so blind as not to discover that it gives to the society itself the right to judge as to who shall be full Church members; for otherwise, *why* should the Discipline provide that the candidates should be examined '*before the society*?' If the preacher is sole judge of the matter, why bring it to the notice of the society at all?"

"I do not know, sir, unless it were for the mere purpose of

deluding the members with the idea that they have some sort of power, while, in fact, they have none. If you think I misunderstand the purport of the Discipline, perhaps you will admit the explanation of your own bishops. In their notes on the Discipline, (chap. i., sec. 10,) as quoted by your own brother, Emory, in this 'History of the Discipline,' pp. 304-307, we read, '5. He [the minister] is also to receive members on trial, and into society, according to the form of Discipline. *If this authority were invested in the society, or any part of it, the great work of revival would soon be at an end.*'

. . . 'Glory be to God, *all* our societies throughout the world, now amounting to upwards of one hundred and sixty thousand, have been raised under grace by our *ministers and preachers*. *They* and *they only* are their spiritual fathers under God, and none can feel for them as *they* do. It is true that on great revivals the spiritually halt, and blind, and lame, will press in crowds *into the Church of God*; and they are welcome to all that we can do for their invaluable souls, till they prove unfaithful to convincing or converting grace. And we will not throw back their souls on the wicked world, while groaning under the burden of sin, because many on the trial quench their convictions, or, perhaps, were hypocritical from the beginning. We would sooner go again into the highways and hedges and form new societies, as at first, than we would give up a privilege so *essential to the ministerial office*, and to the revival of the work of God.' . . . 'The Master of the house [God] said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and "*bring in hither* the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; and the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." He obeys his God *without asking permission of ANY SOCIETY* whether he should obey him or not And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and *compel them to come in, that ~~my~~*

house may be filled. Luke xiv. 21-23. The servant answers not his Lord, I will comply with thy command so far as MY SOCIETY or my leaders and stewards will permit me.'

. . . Again: 'Now what pastors called and owned of God would take upon themselves this awful responsibility [that of the pastoral office] if OTHERS could refuse to their spiritual children the grand, external privilege of the gospel, or admit among them the most improper persons to mix with and corrupt them? Truly, whatever the pastors of other Churches may do, we trust that ours will never put themselves under so dreadful a bondage. It is in vain to say that others may be as tender and cautious as the pastors; for the *pastors* are the persons responsible to God, and, therefore, should by no means be fettered in their pastoral care.' And again: 'If ministers are to be the judges of the proper subjects of *baptism*, which is the grand initiatory ordinance into the visible Church, how much more should they have a right to determine whom they will take under their own care, or whom God has given them out of the world, by the preaching of his word. For ministers to spend their strength, their tears, their prayers, their lives, for the salvation of souls, and [then] to have both themselves and THEIRS under the control of those who never travailed in birth for them, and, therefore, can never feel for them as their spiritual parents do, is a burden we cannot bear. Thus it is evident that both reason and Scripture do, in the clearest manner, make the privilege or power now under consideration [that of receiving members into the Church] *essential* to the gospel *ministry*.'

"I trust you will not accuse your own BISHOPS of misapprehending the design and the practical working of the system."

"I think," said Dr. Thinkwell, "that we may venture to pass on to our next *test* or *mark*. We are spending more time than we need to occupy with this. The *main fact*, that

is that the Conference has power to make laws which the members must obey, or cease to be members of the Church, will not be disputed; and that is all that is essential to our present purpose."

"What is our next test, Mrs. Percy?"

"It declares that in a true Church all its members must have become such, not by birth, not by the act of their parents, not by a law of the State, *but by their own voluntary act.*"

"If, as we have seen, infants are made members of this Church by baptism, it is certain that she has not this mark; but, as she virtually repudiates her own act, and denies in practice her own teachings, I hardly know," said Mr. Percy. "whether to mark her black or white on this test."

"We have determined already," said Mr. Courtney, "from their own authorities, that they themselves consider the baptized infants as Church-members; and it is on this ground, and for the very purpose of making them Church-members, that they baptize them. Now, if they make them Church-members, and then practically disown them, by refusing to permit them to enjoy the privilege of membership, this shows their inconsistency; but it cannot disannul the act which makes the children of the Church members, or make them *not* Church-members. We, therefore, must count them members, although they who received them, and made them such, see fit to ignore their own act, and treat them in all respects as though they were not and never had been.

"It is only one of the many inconsistencies into which Pedobaptism drives those who practice it. The Methodist Church is guilty of the double inconsistency of receiving to her communion, and treating in all things *as though they were* Church-members, those whom they say *are not*, namely, the seekers, and of shutting out from their communion, and treating in all respects *as though they were not*, those who they

say *are* Church-members, made such by baptism in their fancy. We cannot stop to reconcile them to themselves; and they would not probably thank us for our trouble, if we should try to do so. Let us hasten on with our investigation.

“What is the next mark, Mrs. Percy?”

“It requires that a true Church *shall hold as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.*”

“Here,” said Dr. Thinkwell, “we shall need your assistance, neighbor Stiptain, unless my friends are more familiar with the doctrines of your Church than I am. I know that it is generally counted among the so-called evangelical or orthodox Churches, and that many of its ministers and members give evidence of devoted piety; but what your standards may teach as Christian doctrine, I am not so well informed; and you know, in such a discussion as this, we can only recognize those as the doctrines of any Church which that Church herself acknowledges and publishes by her own acts. Perhaps you will do us the kindness to tell us where we can find a statement of your acknowledged doctrines.”

“With the greatest pleasure, sir. You will find our articles of faith in the Discipline; and what are not mentioned there, in Wesley’s Sermons and Watson’s Institutes, and other works published by consent or order of Conference. Our Brother Gorrie has well said, in his History of Methodism, (p. 135 :) ‘The doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church are principally embraced in the twenty-five Articles of Religion, found in the Book of Discipline. These articles are nearly the same with those of the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.’

“‘When the Reverend John Wesley set apart Dr. Coke to the office of Superintendent of the societies in America, and instructed him to organize said societies into an independent Church, he prepared a Prayer-book, or Sunday service, for the use of the infant Church, in which Prayer-book the Articles

of Religion were contained as now found, excepting the one relating to rulers, which was framed at the organization of the Church in 1784, and shortly after was printed in the form of Discipline; since which time no change of any importance has been made in the articles referred to.' 'We have stated in substance,' our brother goes on to say, 'that these Articles embrace the *most* of the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We do not say that all the doctrines of the Methodists are clearly set forth in the same. . . Still, what is not clearly stated and taught in the same is stated and taught in the *other standard writings of the Church*, such as Wesley's Sermons, and Watson's Institutes.'"

"It occurs to me," said Mr. Percy, "that in regard to the other claimants whom we have already tried by our rules, we asked but one question under the present head, and that was, Whether they held that salvation is by faith alone, or whether they held to a sort of *sacramental* salvation through or by the observance of the ordinances of the Church? It is very true that this is not all that is essential to Christianity; but as this doctrine is contained in the very annunciation of the gospel, we have taken it for granted that if this were wanting, all else would be but vain pretension. Now, in the Roman Catholic Church there is an open avowal of the necessity of works and sacraments for salvation. And while the Church of England, in the form of words used in her Articles of Faith, teaches that we are justified by faith only, and not for our own works or deservings, her liturgy and many of her ministers evidently teach, and her people believe, that we can come into that relation to Christ which is expressed by faith, and which secures salvation, *only by means of the sacraments of the Church*; and as this exalts the reception of the sacraments to the condition of an *essential means of salvation*, so that no one can have any assurance of eternal life who has not been baptized, and thus properly qualified for heaven by

the priest and his ceremonies, we were disposed to doubt whether the High-Church party of the English Church really could be said to hold this fundamental gospel truth; and, consequently, we marked her but half white. Now, the question may arise, whether a large portion of the Methodist Church do not hold the same error, in much the same form. Do they not hold, for instance, that baptism, instead of being the *sign* that the person baptized professes *already to have been born again*, is the *means* or *instrumentality* by which he *is* born again? Do they not hold and teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and consequent baptismal salvation?"

"I never heard that they did," said the Doctor, "and do not see why you should have any suspicion that such is the case."

"Simply," replied Mr. Percy, "because I find this doctrine plainly taught in express words in those books which they are constantly publishing, and their preachers are daily scattering all over the country, as their standards of doctrine."

"I wish you would tell us what books," said the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "for I am sure no *Methodist* author could publish such sentiments without being at once repudiated by the Conference. Baptismal regeneration is certainly no part of our creed."

"So Mr. A. Campbell *says* it is no part of *his*, and yet he uses such words in telling what he *does* believe that candid inquirers cannot understand him to mean any thing else. And just so, you will permit me to say, the acknowledged standards of your Church use language of the same sort; insomuch, that if it does not mean to teach the doctrine that *baptism is for the ACTUAL washing away of sins*, (and not merely the symbol which signifies that they *have been* washed away,) I do not know what it does mean.

"If I should tell *my* people that by baptism they were *admitted into the Church*, they would understand that I

meant what I said ; that I intended to affirm, and did affirm, that it was by baptism that they were made Church members, and that in such a sense, that if they *had not been baptized* they would not have been Church-members. And then if I should go on and say, further, that in the ordinary way there was no other means but baptism of entering into the Church, *or into heaven*, they would still understand that I meant what I said, and that I intended to teach, and *did* teach, that as they could not enter *the Church* without baptism, no more could they enter *heaven* without it. If I should say that we, who were by nature the children of wrath, were made the children of God *by baptism*, you and all who heard me would think I meant just what I said.

“ If I, or any Baptist, should say that we are *regenerated and born again* by the *water of baptism*, people would think we meant what we said ; and I am sure they would have good reason to suppose that we believed in and taught baptismal regeneration.

“ If I, or any Baptist, should say that infants in the ordinary way could not be saved unless their original sin be washed away by baptism, you would think we meant to teach the doctrine of *baptismal salvation*.

“ And now, if I should write a tract, or a sermon, and the Baptist Churches should direct it to be printed and published, and should instruct their ministers and their people to give it as large a circulation as possible, and should send forth one edition of it after another, earnestly *commending* it to the Church and to the world, would you not think that these Churches held and taught the same doctrines which you would have understood me to teach ? ”

“ Of course we could not help thinking so.”

“ How then, let me ask, can you help believing that the Methodist Church holds these same doctrines ? for what I have supposed myself to say, *Mr Wesley actually did say*. I

merely transposed the words. And what I have supposed our Churches to have done, the *Methodist Church has actually done*, and is *still doing every day*. The Conference has directed Mr. Wesley's tract on baptism to be published; they encourage if they do not actually require all their preachers to circulate it, and their members to read it. This tract contains such language as this. I will read it to you, or you may read it for yourself. You will find it on page 251 of the volume of Doctrinal Tracts, published by the Book Concern:—

“‘If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, *seeing IN THE ORDINARY WAY THEY CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS THIS BE WASHED AWAY BY BAPTISM*. It has already been proved that this original stain cleaves to every child of man, and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to eternal damnation. It is true the second Adam has found a remedy for the disease which came upon all by the offence of the first. *But the benefit of this is to be received through the means which he hath appointed*, THROUGH BAPTISM IN PARTICULAR, which is the ordinary means he hath appointed for that purpose, and to which God hath tied us, though he may not have tied himself. Indeed, where it cannot be had, the case is different; but extraordinary cases do not make void a standing rule. This, therefore, is our first ground: *infants need to be washed from original sin, and, therefore, they are proper subjects of baptism.*’

“If Mr. Courtney, or I, or any Baptist, should thus teach that children or grown people could only be cleansed from sin (whether original or actual) *by baptism*, and could not ordinarily be saved without it, *we* would certainly be accused of teaching *salvation by water*. But when *Mr. Wesley* does it, some people can see no harm in it.

“So on page 248 you may read as follows:

“‘BY BAPTISM *we who were by nature the children of*

we **are** **made** *the children of God.* And this *regeneration* which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism is more than barely being admitted into the Church, though commonly connected therewith: being grafted into the body of Christ's Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace. This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. *By water, AS A MEANS, the water of baptism, WE ARE REGENERATED OR BORN AGAIN.'*

"Let any *Baptist* talk thus, and he would surely be thought to teach that men were *regenerated* and made the children of God and the heirs of glory '*by water,*' by '*THE WATER OF BAPTISM.*' And I cannot help thinking that this is what the words mean as Mr. Wesley wrote them, as the Conference approved them, as the preachers circulate them, and as the people read them. I presume that Mr. Wesley and the Conference understood the English language, and knew what these words would signify to those who read them; and I suppose, therefore, that *they meant to teach* what the words express; and, therefore, that *the Methodist Episcopal Church does hold, as an article of faith, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.*"

"But, my dear sir," said the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "you have overlooked the foot-note at the bottom of page 249, which shows that the Conference did *not* intend to endorse Mr. Wesley's views on this point."

"No, sir, I did not overlook the foot-note; I can see nothing in it which denies that they heartily coincide with Mr. Wesley in *doctrine*, though they don't seem to like his frank and open *expression* of it. I will read the note, that we may see what it amounts to:

"That Mr. Wesley, as a clergyman of the Church of England, was originally a *H'gh-Churchman* in the fullest sense, is

well known. When he wrote this treatise, in the year 1756 he *seems* still to have used some expressions in relation to the doctrine of regeneration which we at this day would not prefer. Some such in the judgment of the reader may *perhaps* be found under this second head. This last sentence, however, contains a guarded corrective. It explains also the sense in which we believe Mr. Wesley intended much of what goes before to be understood.'

"Now, does this sound to you like a bold and absolute *disapproval* of the false and abominable doctrine? Does it say, This, though asserted by Mr. Wesley, is not scriptural nor true? Does it say we are *not* regenerated and born again by water baptism? No, sir; they very cautiously say he *seems* to have used some *expressions* which they at *this day* (when the doctrine has become odious to many) would not *have preferred*. The *reader* may be like us, one who abominates the wretched and soul-destroying delusion; and, therefore, they seem to think HE *may, perhaps*, think there are some objectionable sentences. Is this the way honest men and earnest men would have expressed their dissent from the doctrine if they had not connived at it?

"But the last sentence, they say, 'contains a guarded corrective,' and explains the sense in which *they think* Mr. Wesley should be understood. What *that sentence*, therefore, does not correct, they leave uncorrected; and except so far as *that sentence* modifies his meaning, they leave the reader to suppose that they agree with and approve of Mr. Wesley's doctrine. Now what is that '*last sentence*?' It is this: 'Baptism doth now save us if we live answerable thereto—if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel: supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.' Let us see now what is the force of this explanatory '*last sentence*.' If you repent, believe, and obey the gospel, will your obedience, your faith, and your repentance save you? No; but if

you have these, *your baptism* will save you. It is not the penitence, faith, or obedience, but the *baptism*, that admits us into the Church here, and it is baptism that is to admit us 'into glory hereafter'

"This sentence does not intimate that any one can ordinarily be saved without baptism as a means, but only that baptism *of itself* is not *all* that is needful to salvation. It does not contradict or nullify the statement made before, that 'by baptism we are made the children of God;' that by the water of baptism we are regenerated or born again; that 'herein' (that is, in baptism) 'a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness;' but it only intimates that this new birth, this principle of grace, this sonship to God, obtained by water baptism as the means, will not be of any *use to us* unless we repent, and believe, and obey the gospel, while it leaves us to infer that the repentance, faith, and obedience, would be of just as little use without the baptism.

"But to show, once for all, that the Conference *did not intend* to expurgate the writings of Mr. Wesley, and free them from this *heresy*, but that they *continue* heartily to commend them, including those which teach this perversion of the gospel with the rest, look at the volume of his sermons published for the Conference, and specially required to be studied by every minister of the denomination. The doctrine is there as plainly as here, and it is there sent forth entirely unguarded by any note of explanation or denial. See p. 405, vol. i., Wesley's Works, Sermon XLV. :

" 'From the preceding reflections we may, secondly, observe, that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism. They do not constantly go together. A man may possibly be born of water, and yet not be born of the Spirit. There may sometimes be the outward

sign where there is not the inward grace. I do not speak now with regard to infants. It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in infancy are, at the same time, born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants; for neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in one of riper years.' Now what could be made plainer than this—that as regards infants they are *always* born again, and, consequently, made heirs of God when they are baptized? An adult *may possibly* be baptized without being regenerated, but can he be regenerated without being baptized, or without having been baptized? Is not baptism the *means* by which the adult must be born again, if he be born again at all? Is there one way by which infants are regenerated, and another by which adults are regenerated? But if Methodists could accomplish what they desire, and this teaching of their standard sermons is true, there would be no such thing as being born again in adult age, unless one can be born again the second time; for they would, if possible, regenerate *all* while they are yet infants.

“But to make the matter still plainer, and, if possible, set it for ever at rest, I will show you that what Wesley taught so plainly a hundred years ago, and the Conference has been publishing and commending, and absolutely *requiring* her ministers to study, in order that they might preach, ever since the Methodist Church has had any existence, is taught, in substance, in one of the most recent and most popular works of the denomination; which, though not published by *order* of the Conference, must have received *their approbation*, since it is expressly provided in the Discipline, part 2d, sec. 8, that ‘Any travelling preacher who may publish any book of his own, shall be responsible to his Conference for any obnoxious matter or doctrine therein contained;’ and this work has not only

called for *no censure* from the Conference, but has been *special-ly commended* by two presiding elders, and by the Conference papers. I refer to the book which has been so often quoted in our conversation—The History of the Methodist Church, by the Rev. P. Douglass Gorrie. I will show you that he, in 1851, teaches baptismal regeneration, though not as *plainly*, yet quite as really and unmistakably as did Mr Wesley in 1756. Mr. Gorrie teaches just as Mr. Wesley and Mr. A. Campbell teaches, that baptism, instead of *following* faith in Christ, to signify, symbolize, and seal the new birth already experienced and now openly professed, IS THE INSTRUMENT OR MEANS by which sins are actually remitted, and pardon actually obtained. He says, (p. 173,) speaking of those baptized upon the day of Pentecost, ‘Now it is evident that these persons were *not believers* in the sense of being regenerate, unless regenerating faith precedes repentance for sin; for they were first to repent, and then to be baptized for, *in order to*, the remission of sins. And, thirdly, as the result of such repentance and baptism, they were taught to expect the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ Now this rendering of the little preposition ‘*eis*,’ for, ‘*in order to*,’ is very significant. When Christ told the leper whom he had cleansed, to go and show himself to the priest, and offer the gifts that Moses commanded, (‘*eis*,’) *for* his cleansing, no one understands him to mean that the gifts were to be offered *in order to procure his cleansing*, but as an expression of the fact that he was already cleansed, and for the formal public and *official* recognition and proclamation of that fact. So, when Peter says, ‘Repent and be baptized *for* the remission of your sins,’ it is *not in order to obtain* the remission of their sins, but to give public expression to the fact that their sins had already been remitted on their true repentance, which is always accompanied by true faith; since the Lord has expressly said, that without faith ~~no~~ one can be saved, and yet has promised salvation to the true

penitent. The baptism was like the offerings of the leper—*for the formal public and official* recognition and proclamation of the fact that their sins had already been remitted, and for their consequent public reception into the number of the children of God. This is the explanation which is given and received by those who deny the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But those who, like Mr. A. Campbell and M. Wesley, teach that baptism is the *means* of regeneration, or that it is itself regeneration, or that in some way or other there is some such connection or relation between them, that regeneration and remission of sins are experienced in or by baptism—these persons are all accustomed to render this word as Gorrie has done, ‘*in order to,*’ so that it may signify that *it is by baptism as a means*, or medium, that remission of sins is secured. And that this is what he means in the passage we are considering, is evident from the object for which he introduces it, which is, to prove that the *unconverted* penitent, that is, the convicted sinner, may be baptized while unregenerate; for Peter, as he thinks, told these unregenerate sinners to *be baptized ‘for,’* that is, ‘in order to’ obtain the remission of their sins. But in speaking of the case of Paul in the same connection, he expressly declares that it does prove that *baptism is the means* or instrumentality by which pardon is obtained. By a *penitent* Mr. Gorrie has explained (p. 172) that he means persons who are convicted of sin, but yet unregenerate; and now he says, ‘Another example of the baptism of penitents is given in the case of the Apostle Paul. After being arrested by the light and voice from heaven, he fasted and prayed in blindness, natural and spiritual, for three days. In this condition Ananias finds him. His natural sight returns, but spiritual darkness remains; and then Ananias says to him, Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. From this example it appears that baptism is both a *means* and seal of pardon

and consequently that true penitents may and ought to be baptized.

"Now no one denies that *true penitents*, in the sense of *re-generate* penitents, ought to be baptized; but in that case how can baptism be the *means* of their pardon, since they have been already pardoned the moment they repented? But he would have us understand that Paul, though penitent, had not been pardoned, and could only be by baptism as *the means*."

"You have all, it seems to me," said Mr. Courtney, "given yourselves a great deal of needless trouble. If your object had been merely to determine whether the Methodist Episcopal Church believes and teaches the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, either as regards infants or adults, you need not have gone outside the Discipline itself. Mr. Wesley, in the passage you have cited, does not more clearly avow it in regard to infants, than the Discipline teaches it in regard to adults."

"It is very strange, sir," said the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "that you can see things in the Discipline which Methodists themselves have always been ignorant of."

"Methodists, my dear sir, may have read the words or heard the words so carelessly, that they have never attended to their natural and necessary meaning; but you yourself have taught, and your people have heard you teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration *every time* you have gone through your office for the ministration of baptism, either for an infant or adult. But not to waste our time in talking about the infants, since Mr. Wesley settles that beyond all cavil, let me call your attention to the formula for the baptism of such as are of riper years, chap. v., sec. 2. Remember, the question about which we are at issue is this: Whether baptism is to *follow* regeneration as an open and formal profession of it on the part of the candidate, and an official recognition of it on the part of the Church, or whether it is to be employed as the *means* or in

strumentality by which, or upon which, or in connection with which; regeneration is either effected or secured. Now, as Wesley says that the whole office for infant baptism proceeds on the supposition that infants are regenerated when they are baptized, so I say that the whole office for the baptism of those of riper years proceeds on the supposition that those coming to baptism are yet *unregenerate*, and that it is expected and understood that by baptism, or in baptism, they may and will become regenerate.

“1st. ‘The minister shall use the following, etc. : Dearly beloved brethren, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, (and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions,) and that our Saviour saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost, I beseech you——’ What? To thank God that he has in his great mercy already renewed and regenerated these persons, and so fitted them to be received as members of his kingdom? Not at all. ‘I beseech you call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that he *will grant* to these persons that which by nature they cannot have: that they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ’s holy Church, and be made lively members of the same.’

“2. Having thus entreated the brethren to help him pray, he goes on, and in their name offers the following prayer: ‘Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need, the helper of all that flee to thee for succor, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead——’ We *return thee hearty thanks that thou hast regenerated these persons and freely remitted all their sins, in token whereof they have come to be baptized according to thy appointment?* No such

thing. But, 'We call upon thee for these persons that they [in] coming to thy holy baptism MAY RECEIVE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS BY SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.'

"Do they not come *unregenerate* that they may in baptism receive regeneration and remission of sins? And then again, after giving God thanks that they themselves, *the Church*, have been called to the knowledge of his grace and to faith in him, and praying that this may be increased and confirmed, the prayer turns again to the candidates as follows: '*Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, THAT THEY MAY BE BORN AGAIN, and be made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ,*' etc.

"Now, on the supposition that 'these persons' are still *in sin*, still *unconverted*, still *unregenerate*, and that baptism is the ordinary *means* appointed by God for their conversion and salvation, the whole thing is very appropriate. In that case it is very proper and fitting that the minister should pray that they may now be born again, and, coming to baptism, may receive spiritual regeneration and the remission of their sins. But on the supposition that they were already regenerate, had already been born again, and had already received the actual remission of their sins, this is all simple foolery. Nay, it is worse: it is a solemn mockery. It is not merely absurd, it is absolutely wicked. It is asking God to do in baptism what the candidates expressly profess by their coming to his holy baptism *has been done* for them already, and which they come thus to *acknowledge* before the world, and have it *officially recognized* by the Church."

"But," said Theodosia, "you do not suppose the Methodists as a general thing believe in this sacramental salvation?"

"It is likely," replied Mr. Courtney, "that they as a general thing never have cared or thought any thing about it. They leave their preachers to do their thinking for them

and the preachers as a general thing are content to repeat the thoughts of Mr. Wesley, without giving themselves the trouble of deciding whether they were right or wrong. But they *ought* to think; and if they do not believe and are unwilling to teach what their standards express, it is a duty which they owe to God, to their people, and themselves, to expurgate their Discipline and their standards of this pernicious error; and until they have done it, we must take it for granted that they *do* believe and heartily endorse what they permit to remain as the public and acknowledged teachings of their official documents.

"But let us go on; we are making but little progress. What is the next mark in our little tablet?"

"The true Church *is that which began with Christ, and has continued to the present time.*"

"Is this true of the Methodist Church?"

"As I am here by request of my friend and neighbor merely to give such information as I may have and you may need," said the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "I do not feel and have not felt that I am called upon to make any defence of the Methodist Episcopal Church; but if I should feel disposed to engage in any discussion of the main question which seems to engage your attention, I am sure I would object to your tests, and especially to this. Why, sirs, there is no Church in existence now, except the great Church universal, which began with Christ and has continued to the present time. The Church of Rome did not begin, according to Protestant computation, until the year 606. The Church of England began in the reign of Henry the Eighth; the Presbyterian Church dates from John Calvin, at Geneva; and we are proud to say that the Methodist Episcopal Church began with John Wesley in 1739, if we count his societies as the beginning of it, and the Church proper was first organized at Baltimore in 1784. Though the others may be older than

the . they are *none* of them so old as your test requires, in order that they may be considered as true Churches of Christ."

"Our test," replied Mr. Courtney, "is based upon the prophecies, which foretold that Christ's Church should be perpetual until he came again. We know nothing of any visible *universal* Church, and, therefore, we suppose there must be yet upon the earth, and always have been, some examples of that local visible Church which Christ established by himself or his apostles. We do not mean to say that any particular local society of Christian people must have existed from the days of Christ in order that it may be counted as a Church. We know that the Church at Jerusalem has been supplanted, the Church at Antioch has long ago been destroyed, the Church at Rome has apostatized, and Satan's seat is now where once Christ reigned. But *just such Churches*, in all essential characteristics, as these were in the days of their purity, we believe have, according to the prophecies both of the Old Testament and the New, been in existence all the time since Christ, and still exist. To *them* he has all the time intrusted the execution of the laws and the administration of the ordinances of his visible kingdom. Now, as the jury may very properly be said to have begun at a certain time in England, and to have continued ever since, although no individual jury has, perhaps, ever continued for a year, and most of them only for a day; so the Church, as an *institution* of Christ, might be said to have continued to the present time, although no particular example of it had continued for a year. What we mean, therefore, is, that the true Church for which we are looking must be an example of that institution which Christ set up, and which he and the apostles called the Church, and *not* something entirely different from it, originating with some one else long since that time, and called by the same name. Now, if your M^r

thodist Churches were each one independent of the Conference, and independent of all other Churches; if they consisted of believers only, and these believers had all been baptized; if they had the same membership, the same terms of communion, the same ordinances, the same organization, and held the same doctrines with the Church at Jerusalem, and the Church at Antioch, and the Church at Ephesus, and the multitude of Churches that in the apostles' days were scattered throughout all Judea, and Samaria, and Asia, we would concede to you that you began with Christ; for in that case you would have nothing that you got from Wesley, and nothing that Wesley got for you from the Church of England, but only what you got for yourselves from the Bible; and you would not be what Wesley made you, or what your sixty preachers made you at Baltimore in 1784, but what Christ made you when he gave in his word the constitution of his Church. But now you *are* what Wesley made you, and what the Baltimore Conference of preachers made you. You have received the constitution and the laws which characterize you as the Methodist Episcopal Church, and distinguish you from other so-called Churches, not from Christ, but from Wesley and the Conference. The simple fact that you recognized the authority of Wesley and the Conference to make laws for you, is itself conclusive evidence that you do not *as a Church* belong to Christ, but to Wesley and the Conference."

"You are entirely mistaken, sir," said Mrs. Stiptain, "if you think the Methodists are bound to follow Mr. Wesley any further than he followed Christ. It is true, we have a great regard for his memory, and a great respect for his teachings; but it is because we consider him such an able expounder of the Scriptures that we receive his doctrines. It is not, however, on his authority, but on the authority of his Master and ours, that we are ready to obey his requirements and those of the Conference. If they could not give us good scriptura.

proof of all that they taught, I am sure we should be under no obligations to obey."

"Then, madam, it has never occurred to you that the very things about which the Discipline made for you by Mr. Wesley and the Conference is most rigid in its demands are those concerning which there is least Scripture to sustain them?"

"No, sir, it never did, nor does it now."

"Permit me, then, to call to your mind that there are several scriptures which teach, both by precept and example, the duty of attending on the regular meetings of the Church, to worship God upon the Sabbath. And there are several which at least strongly intimate the duty of Christian people to assemble for social and united prayer in the prayer-meeting; and not a single text which commands or intimates the existence or the necessity for the *class-meeting*. And yet your Discipline permits people to stay away from the meeting for public worship, and from the prayer-meeting, with perfect impunity. You have no rule which requires them even to make an excuse for their absence; but if they venture to *stay away from the CLASS-MEETING, you are bound to exclude them from the Church*.

"Permit me to remind you further, that since your Conference has, in some years, required conditions of membership and terms of admission into the Church which they have abrogated or changed in other years, they could not possibly have Scripture authority for their varying and contradictory requirements, unless the Scriptures are changeable and contradictory. If, for example, it was such a sin to hold slaves in 1784, that no one by Scripture authority could be permitted to come into the Church of Christ until he had made a deed of manumission, and had it recorded in the county clerk's office, and no one who was in the Church could remain there more than a year, or two years at farthest if such was the Scripture requirement in 1784, it must hav

been the same in 1785, when the preachers were advised to suspend the execution of the law; which, on the supposition that the law was founded on God's word, would be to refuse obedience to God's word. And the same rule will apply to every instance in which they have made terms of admission or conditions of membership, and then have set them aside or changed them. The word of God is not thus double-tongued; what it once says it stands to for ever; and the *same* terms and conditions upon which people were received and permitted to remain as Church-members in the days of the apostles, must be the terms and conditions of membership now and ever, till Christ comes again. If the Conference have changed them six times, then it is certain that *five* times at least they must have departed from the Scriptures; and yet, as a Methodist, you must have followed them every time. But this is wandering from our subject. We were going to look at the origin of the Methodist Church, though I do not know but we have seen enough already to govern the application of our test."

"I find in my mind," said Theodosia, "some little confusion of ideas about this matter. You constantly speak of the Methodist Church as originating with Mr. Wesley; and when I associate it with Mr. Wesley, I locate it in England. And yet you all agree that it began in 1784, at Baltimore, in Maryland, in this country. How could it begin with Mr Wesley, in England, and yet begin in Baltimore?"

"Your difficulty," replied Mr. Courtney, "arises from your not making the necessary distinction between *Methodism* and the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Discipline dates the rise of *Methodism* from 1729, when John and Charles Wesley are said to have first discovered that people could not be saved without holiness, and began to try to be holy and induce others to be so. This was nine years before the conversion of either of them. John had already been for some time a

minister of the Church of England, and Charles was also made one before his conversion. Now, the simple fact that these two unconverted young men began, in 1729, to try to get to heaven by an exact and regular *method* of living, has caused this to be received as the beginning of the system of Methodism. And there are some people who think that, as a system, it is now what it was in the beginning, namely, a *methodical* attempt to get to heaven by external observances and strictness of living. The first *society* of Methodists was composed of Mr. Wesley and two or three students at the university, who agreed to associate together for the more effectual prosecution of their classical studies, and the better attainment of a correct moral and religious character. These other young men, we presume, were, like himself, yet unconverted. They used to meet, not so much to pray and praise God, and read his word, as to study the classics and read to each other passages of the heathen poets of Greece and Rome. These young men, because they studied *by rule*, were nicknamed Methodists. The society does not seem to have laid any claim to be regarded as a *religious* society. Whether Mr. Wesley formed any more such I do not know. In 1738, some nine years after this, by the advice of a Moravian bishop, or pastor, he and a few others formed a *religious* society, which was composed partly of Moravians and partly of Church of England men; and shortly after this, he was led to see that he could not make himself holy, and to trust his soul to *Christ* for salvation, as was also his brother Charles, about the same time. In 1739 the first regular society was formed, the foundation of the first Methodist preaching-house was laid in England, and the *class-meetings* were instituted; and this therefore *should* be regarded as the beginning of the system. The object of the class-meeting was to collect so much a week from every member, to pay for the chapel.

“At first, *societies* were formed wherever Mr. Wesley

preached, and all who chose united with them. The only condition was a desire to do so. But, in 1743, Mr. Wesley prepared and published his '*rules for the societies.*'

"In these rules he says, '*There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, namely, a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.*' But it was expected of those who would continue in the society that they should continue to give evidence of this desire by a life of strict morality, and the observance of the external requirements of religion.

"These societies were not Churches of Jesus Christ; their members did not so regard them. Mr. Wesley was very careful that they should not be so considered. They were no more Churches of Christ than a temperance society, or a missionary society, or a Bible society, is a Church of Christ. Mr. Wesley was a member and a minister of the Church of England, and he regarded his societies, not as a rival Church, but as a part of that Church.

"But how can that be ascertained? Why, in the first place, it has never, that I know of, been denied; and, in the next place, Mr. Wesley himself said it was so again and again. Here, in the '*History of the Discipline,*' which we have had occasion to refer to so often, (page 57,) you may read the official instructions which he gave to his preachers: 'Exhort all who were brought up in the Church to continue therein. Set the example yourself, and immediately change every plan that would hinder their being at Church at least two Sundays in four. Carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the Church; and let all the servants in our preaching-houses go to Church once on Sunday, at least.'

"Is there not a cause? Are we not unawares, by little and little, sliding into separation from the Church? O, use every means to prevent this. 1. Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and sacrament. 2. Warn them against

and niceness of hearing, a prevailing evil. 3. Warn them also against despising the prayers of the Church. 4. *Against calling our society* the Church. 5. Against calling our preachers ministers, our houses meeting-houses: call them plain preaching-houses, or chapels,' etc.

"Question. But are we not dissenters?"

"Answer. No. Although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion, and although we frequently use extemporary prayer, and unite together in a religious society, yet we are not dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely, those who renounce the service of the Church. We do not, we *dare* not, separate from it.'

"Thus Mr. Wesley talked in England. How did the preachers talk in America? Let us turn to page 10: 'At the first Conference, held in Philadelphia, June, 1773, the following rules were agreed to by all the preachers present:

"1. Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labor in America, is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper

"2. All the people among whom we labor to be earnestly exhorted to attend the Church, [of England,] and to receive the ordinances there.'

"And, six years later, on page 13:

"Question 10. Shall we guard against a separation from the Church, directly or indirectly?

"Answer. By all means.'

"And again, in 1780, page 14: 'Question 12. Shall we continue in close connection with the Church, [of England,] and press our people to a closer communion with her?

"Answer. Yes.'

"But after the Revolutionary War the Church of England was not so popular as it once was in this country. Most of its ministers, on the breaking out of hostilities, had taken sides with England, and had been obliged to leave America

or remain under a load of odium which would prevent their usefulness. And it was now conceived that it was necessary to constitute these Methodist *societies into a Church*; which was done partly by Mr. Wesley, and partly by the sixty preachers who met in Baltimore in 1784. They had, as members of the Church of England, been accustomed to think that there could be no Church without a bishop; and, consequently, Mr. Wesley furnished them a Prayer-book and Liturgy, and made a bishop for them, and authorized him to make another. This was his part. Then the two bishops called together their clergy into a Conference at Baltimore, and the bishops and the sixty preachers unanimously determined that they were *a Church*; and, as a Church, laid down the rules by which the bishops and the preachers were to govern the people. These rules were put forth as the form of Discipline, and published in 1785, and, with sundry modifications, are what is now known as the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This Discipline, for the most part, was that by which Mr. Wesley and his preachers had before governed the *societies*. So that the Methodist Church, as first formed, was simply the Methodist preachers with the addition of a pair of bishops, who resolved that they were a Church, and thus became one. And so it was decided in the great Methodist lawsuit that the bishops and travelling preachers are now the Church.

“What had before been the rules of *the societies*, now became the rules of *the Church*. What were before the terms of admission into the *societies*, became the terms of admission into the Church.

“As it had been only needful for one to profess a desire of salvation, to come into the *society*, so this was all that was needful to come into the *Church*.

“As they had not been permitted to continue in the *society* over three months unless they gave evidence of a continuance

of his desire, so it was determined that they should not continue in the Church; but the term of probation was shortened to two months; and, after some years, lengthened again to six.

"In one thing the societies had been, as the new-made Church thought, very guilty. They had, apparently, connived at slavery. Slaveholders, who desired to escape from hell, had been as welcome to come into the *societies* and try to get religion as other people. But the *Church* would none of them. It resolved that *no slaveholder* should come in, even upon probation, however earnestly he might desire salvation, until he had first made a deed manumitting all his slaves; and that no one who was in society, and had passed probation, could remain over a year, except in Virginia, and not over two years there, unless he made the deed of manumission and had it recorded. This was the most important change which the Church made in the previous arrangements of the societies; and from this they fell back before a year had passed.

"The Methodist Church, therefore, may be regarded as the continuation of Mr. Wesley's societies, with the Church of England left off, and the bishops added on. As *societies*, they date from Mr. Wesley, in England; as a *Church*, from the two bishops and sixty preachers in Baltimore, Maryland."

"I thank you, sir," said Theodosia. "I now see how it was that my mind was confused. Shall we go on to our next test?"

"In one minute, if you will. I only want to call attention to the fact that the bishops themselves acknowledged, soon after the organization of the Church, and up to the present time continue to acknowledge, that the Discipline and order of their Church is not only of modern date, but is not founded on the word of God, nor formed with any reference to the teachings of the Scriptures. In 1789, five years after the Discipline was formed, the bishops sent out with it an '*Ad*

DISCIPLINE, which has been founded on the experience of a long series of years ; as, also, on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern Churches.

“Signed by

‘JOSHUA SOULE.

‘JAMES O. ANDREW.

‘WILLIAM CAPERS.

‘ROBERT PAINE.’

“The Methodists are, therefore, taught by their own bishops, both the first and the last, that their Discipline is based not on the Bible, but on the ‘*experience of a long series of years*’—explained by the first of them to be fifty years in England and twenty in America—and ‘*on the observations which the bishops had made ‘on ancient and modern Churches.*’

“I am now ready, Mrs. Percy, for the next test.”

“It is,” said she, “that *no true Church of Christ ever persecutes for conscience’ sake.*”

“As the Methodist Church was organized in this land of religious freedom, and has never had the power to persecute, we need not take any time to settle the fact that she has not been a persecutor, and may at once pass on to the next.”

“Which is,” said Theodosia, “*that no apostate Church can be a true Church of Christ.*”

“It seems to me,” said Mr. Percy, “this need hardly require more time than the test we have just passed. Like the Church of England, out of which she came, the Methodist Episcopal Church has never possessed the characteristics of a true Church, and, therefore, could not have lost them ; she never had any other baptism, or ordination, than she could get from the Church of England, and which England got from Rome, and that, as we have seen, (pp. 245-256,) is that of Antichrist itself

DIAGRAM OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

SIGNS OR MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH.		MARKS OF THE METHODIST CHURCH.
<p>1st.</p> <p>It consists only of professed believers in Christ.</p>		<p>It consists in part of baptized infants, and of unconverted seekers. See pp. 306-317.</p>
<p>2d.</p> <p>Its members must have been baptized upon a profession of their faith in Christ.</p>		<p>Most of its members have not been baptized at all, since sprinkling and pouring are not baptism; or, if at all, in infancy, without personal profession of faith. See pp. 317-330.</p>
<p>3d.</p> <p>It is a local independent organization, recognizing no authority above its own but that of Christ.</p>		<p>It is subject to the preacher. It cannot even decide who shall be its own members. It is subject to the bishop. It cannot even choose its own pastor. It is dependent for its very existence as a Church. Pp. 330-342.</p>
<p>4th.</p> <p>It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver.</p>		<p>It is obliged to submit to the Laws of Conference in matters affecting even the right of Church-membership. See pp. 342-374.</p>
<p>5th.</p> <p>Its members were made such by their own voluntary act.</p>		<p>It regards baptized children as members; and so far, they do not come in, but are brought. Its <i>acting</i> members, however, are those who have been received <i>again</i> with their own consent. See p. 375.</p>
<p>6th.</p> <p>It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.</p>		<p>It holds and teaches salvation by faith; but this doctrine is disguised and partly nullified by that of baptismal regeneration. See pp. 376-378.</p>
<p>7th.</p> <p>It was founded by Christ, and has continued to the present time.</p>		<p>It was conceived and established by Mr. Wesley and other <i>men</i>, and began in 1784, by the authority of two bishops and sixty preachers.</p>
<p>8th.</p> <p>It never persecutes for conscience' sake.</p>		<p>It has never had the power to persecute.</p>
<p>9th.</p> <p>No apostate Church can be a Church of Christ.</p>		<p>It was, as coming out of the Church of England, apostate in its very origin. See p. 401.</p>

"We may, therefore, pass at once to the Presbyterian Church, as soon as I have finished my diagram of this."

"The principles which we have already settled and illustrated," said Mr. Courtney, "will enable us to dispose of the other claimants with but a few words upon each of our tests; we need, indeed, scarcely do more than show their real marks in the diagram.

"The PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, for instance, we all know, does not consist of believers only; for it is true, as Dr. Samuel Miller, formerly professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey, said: (p. 257 of his *Letters on the Constitution and Order of the Christian ministry* :)

"Every one who has read our Confession of Faith, knows its doctrine on this subject to be that all who profess the true religion are members of the visible Church; that the *children* of such persons, by *virtue of their birth*, and of course anterior to baptism, *are also members of the Church*, and baptism is only the appointed seal or solemn recognition and ratification of their membership'

"We all know, moreover, that if sprinkling and pouring are not baptism, few of the members of this Church have been baptized at all, and scarcely any have ever been poured upon or sprinkled *upon a personal profession of their faith*; and, according to this plain declaration of Dr. Miller, neither the profession of faith nor baptism *is necessary to Church-membership*. It is only necessary to have been born of parents professing the true religion.

"Our first two tests, therefore, can very readily be applied Nor need the third give us much more trouble, for the CONFESSIO OF FAITH expressly teaches that the local societies, commonly called Churches, are *not* separate and independent organizations, but *parts* of the whole establishment which is known as the Presbyterian Church. See chap. x., p. 418

'*The Church* being *divided into many separate congregations* these need mutual counsel and assistance, in order to preserve soundness of doctrine, regularity of discipline, etc.; hence arise the importance of presbyterial and synodical assemblies. Again, on p. 425, chap. xii., see the explanatory note :

“‘The radical principles of Presbyterian Church-government and discipline are : That the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute *one Church* of Christ, emphatically called *the Church* ; that a larger part of the Church, or representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein ; that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united, that is, that a *majority shall govern* ; and, consequently, that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories, till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the *whole Church*.’

“So far, therefore, is each separate congregation from being an *independent Church*, that it is, by the very genius of Presbyterianism, necessarily considered as but a part of that whole which is emphatically called the Church, and which is to decide for them all questions of doctrine and discipline which may arise in any of these parts. It is, simply, an integral part of a great confederation, having no separate rights of its own, but in all things subject to the control of that assembly which claims to be the representative of the *whole Church*.

“And so in regard to the fourth of our tests. We can very readily decide from the CONFESSIO OF FAITH itself, and with but little loss of time, that *each* of the local Churches, and every member of them, is bound to *receive* and *obey* the decrees of the judicatories above them.

“The truth is, a Presbyterian society, as such, has little if any more ecclesiastical power than an Episcopal, a Methodist, or even a Roman Catholic society possesses. It cannot deter

mine for itself who shall be received as members of its own communion. It cannot determine for itself whether a wicked violator of God's laws shall or shall not continue in their number and fellowship. It cannot decide for itself who shall be called to preach the gospel in its own pulpit. It cannot decide for itself that one who has proved himself unworthy, and alienated their affections, shall not, in spite of their most earnest protest, continue to sustain to them the relation of a pastor."

"Surely," exclaimed Theodosia, "you must express yourself somewhat too strongly. I was for months a member of the Presbyterian Church, and did not become conscious of any interference with my liberties, or those of others."

"And I," said Mr. Percy, "was a member of it still longer than you, and I never felt that there was any restraint upon my liberties; and yet it does not follow that the power to restrain did not exist. Many a citizen may live and die in the dominions of a despot without ever having been the victim of despotic power; but the power existed nevertheless. Our question is, whether the local Presbyterian Church, like the Church at Jerusalem, or the Church at Corinth, or the Church at Ephesus, can, under Christ, *decide for itself* all questions of order and discipline relating to *its own* internal affairs; or whether there is a power outside itself, and above its own, that can determine these things for it, and to the decisions of which it must submit, or cease to be a Presbyterian Church? The way to find the true answer to this question is not to refer to our personal experience or observation, but to look at the written constitution of the Church. We have learned from the Scriptures that it was the *ekklesia*, the Church in her assembled capacity as an official body, which was to receive members to her own communion and fellowship; but the constitution of the Presbyterian Church places this power in the hands of the *pastor and his advisory council*, the elders, of whom

there may be only one or two. It is not the Church, but the session, consisting of the pastor and two ruling elders, (if there be as many,) which 'is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation.' The session is '*to receive members into the Church, to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend, or to exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure.*' Pp. 416, 417. And for its faithfulness or unfaithfulness, it is responsible *not* to the Church, but to the *presbytery*.

"And except in the first particular, the reception of members, the session has not final jurisdiction, for the presbytery has power to hear appeals from their decision, to examine, approve, or censure what they have done, and reverse what it does not approve. But the presbytery is responsible *not* to the Church, but to the *synod*, which may examine into and censure or repeal its decisions. And the synod is not responsible to the Church, but to the *General Assembly*, whose decision alone is final.

"It is, therefore, the General Assembly that has the power to decide who shall and who shall not be members of the separate and particular Churches. It can *never* in *any* instance be *finally* determined by the Church herself, but must be decided for her either by the session, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly.

"And now in regard to the calling or the dismissal of a pastor, nothing can be plainer than the requisitions of the constitutional rules. The Church may earnestly desire a certain minister to take the charge of them. That minister may be very anxious to do so. The Church may meet and give expression to their desire by a formal vote, and embody it in a written request to the said minister to come. But they cannot *send* it to him; they dare not so much as officially to *ask* him to come until they have received the gracious consent of the presbytery under whose care the preacher may be, and

also of that in which the Church may be located See page 439, sec. ix. : 'The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the presbytery under whose care the person called shall be; that if the *presbytery think it expedient* to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented; and no minister or candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the presbytery.' . . .

" 'If the call be to the licentiate of another presbytery, in that case the commissioners deputed by the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce to that judicatory a certificate from their own presbytery, regularly attested by the moderator and clerk, that the call has been laid before them, and that it *s in order.*'

"So again on pages 444, 445, we may read, 'No bishop [that is, pastor] shall be translated from one Church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but *by the permission of the presbytery.*' . . . 'The presbytery being met, and having heard the parties, shall, upon the whole view of the case, either continue him in his former charge, or translate him, *as they shall deem* to be most for the peace and edification of the Church.'

"Then turn to page 448, and read as follows: 'When any minister shall labor under such grievances in his congregation as that he shall desire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear by their commissioners at their next meeting, to show cause, if any they have, why the presbytery should not accept the resignation. If the congregation fail to appear, or if their reasons for retaining their pastor be deemed by the presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made . . . If any congregation shall desire to be released from their pastor, a similar process, *mutatis mutandis*, shall be observed.' "

"I think," said Dr. Thinkwell, "you have clearly made out

your case, and we may pass to the next mark upon our tablet."

"Which is the *fifth*," said Theodosia, "and requires that the members of a true Church *should have become such by their own voluntary act.*"

"But in this Church, as we have seen," said Mr. Courtney, "they are, according to the testimony of Dr. Miller, to which I might add that of others of their standard writers, *born into the Church*, if they chance to be born of parents who professed the true religion. It may be more satisfactory to us, however, to look at the *Confession of Faith* for ourselves. If you will turn to page 146, you may gain further evidence."

"Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the *infants* of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."

"But does this baptism make these unconscious and involuntary recipients of it *Church-members*? and that, too, without any additional and voluntary act of their own? Turn to page 456, and you will see: 'ALL BAPTIZED PERSONS ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH—are under its care and subject to its government and discipline; and when they have arrived at the years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of Church-members.'"

"That certainly is as plain as words can make it," said the Doctor; "and we may pass on to the next test, which is, if I do not forget, that '*A true Church must hold as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.*'"

"And here, I am happy to say," said Mr. Courtney, "we can mark this claimant all white. If every thing about her were as unexceptionable as her system of theology, we would have little to find fault with. But when we come to our *seventh* test, and ask for her *beginning*, we can only trace the Presbyterian Church of the United States back to 1789, or five years later than the organization of the Methodist

Church, at Baltimore. It was in that year that the establishment was *completed* or finished, by adding on to what it had before, that which now constitutes its peculiar characteristic, that is the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, which previous to that time had no existence.

“In the year 1788 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia arranged the present plan of government, by sessions, presbyteries, synods, and a *General Assembly*, and, dividing itself into four synods, gave place to the General Assembly, which met the next year; and thus began the present order of Presbyterianism in America.”

“But how, then,” asked Theodosia, “can the Presbyterian Church be said to have begun with *John Calvin*, at *Geneva*?”

“Just as the Methodist Church began with Wesley, and yet began at Baltimore. John Calvin suggested, defended, and put in practice, to some extent, the outline of the system, and the doctrines that have generally been associated with it. These were condensed and embodied by the famous Westminster Assembly of Divines; and Presbyterian churches—that is, churches governed by presbyters and synods—were established in Switzerland, Scotland, and England; and the ministers and members coming to America brought their principles with them. Societies were organized here, and sessions and presbyteries, and then synods, appointed to rule over them; and the arrangement was completed at length in 1789, by the formation of the General Assembly. But, whether we date the beginning of the system in Philadelphia with the first General Assembly, or at Geneva with John Calvin, or somewhere else, a hundred or a thousand years before John Calvin was born, is of no consequence at all to our present argument. It is enough for us to know that no such system was established by Christ or the apostles. The Church at Jerusalem was not a *part* of something ‘called em-

phatically *the Church*;' but was complete within itself. So was the Church at Antioch, and at Corinth, and at Ephesus; and so were all the Churches of which we read in the Scriptures. They each one ruled its own members, and did not submit to the control of any ecclesiastical bodies outside themselves. They were subject alone to Christ and to the apostles, speaking in the name of Christ, and by inspiration of his Spirit: when they performed an act of discipline, there was no presbytery, no synod, and no general assembly above them to reverse or confirm the sentence given in the '*ekklesia*' itself. The brother aggrieved was to tell the '*ekklesia*'—not the session, or the presbytery, or the synod, or the general assembly: *such things as these did not exist*. Christ did not ordain them, and gave no authority to them. When the *ekklesia*—the local Church—had decided, that was the end of the matter; nor could its decision be reversed by any authority but its own. If any of these judicatory bodies, high or low, existed outside the local Church in the apostles' days the writers of the Scriptures neglected to mention them. We may be sure, therefore, that whenever or wherever a Church was first organized, consisting of a multitude of local societies, so confederated as to form collectively that thing called *the Church*, which was ruled by presbyteries, synods, and a general assembly, it was some time after the completion of the Scripture-record; and that is all our argument requires."

"Our next test," said Theodosia, "is the eighth: *It never persecutes for conscience' sake*."

"The Presbyterian Church of the United States, or, perhaps, I should say *Churches*—for there are now three of them, commonly called the 'Old School,' the 'New School,' and the 'Cumberland'—have none of them, since the completion of their organization, had the opportunity or inclination to persecute. The Presbyterian Churches in Europe, where they

had the power, have been thus guilty; and so the Presbyterians who settled New England were at one time largely imbued with the spirit of persecution. But the Presbyterian Church proper of the United States, I am happy to say, has from the first declared that her judicatory ‘assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral and spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative. . . . The highest punishment to which their authority extends is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers.’

“ We give them our hand on this, and pass to the next and last of our tests. *Is it an apostate Church?* It is *not* apostate in the sense that it was once a true Church, and has since lost the characteristics that made it such; but, like the Episcopal and Methodist Churches, it was apostate in its very origin. It came out of Rome as truly as either of the others; and when it came out, it brought with it the baptism of Antichrist, and the ordination of Antichrist. As the popish councils had introduced the baptism of babes, with the substituted professions of sponsors, so they went still farther, and baptized them *without any profession* at all, but only on a *promise* from those who brought them. The pope had by his decree changed immersion into *pouring*, and they, instead of restoring Christ’s baptism, went still farther, and, on the authority of that ‘godly, learned man, John Calvin, of Geneva,’ changed pouring into *sprinkling*, which was never used for baptism before. (See *Dr. Wall, as quoted in first volume*, p. 177.) They reformed upon the doctrine, and reformed upon the manners, and reformed upon the morals of the Church of Rome; but they did not cast Rome away and go back to the Bible and search there for the original model, as we have done, and confine themselves to it; or look for the Church in the wilderness, where Rome, the great dragon, had

driven her, and *receive from her* that Christian baptism and that Christian ordination *which Rome, as ANTICHRIST, could not confer*. They were content to protest against Rome, and denounce its fearful hierarchy, as the very man of sin and son of perdition; but to this very day they dare not officially declare that the *baptism* and ordination of this Antichrist are not true and valid *Christian* baptism and good and lawful *Christian* ordination; for to do so would be utterly to invalidate their own, since Calvin and his co-presbyters were all baptized and all ordained by *Antichrist*. The question came up in 1854, in the New School General Assembly, which met at Buffalo, whether, as Presbyterians, they could recognize the baptism of the Roman Catholics as valid *Christian* baptism; and while they denounce that Church as the *very ANTICHRIST* foretold in the Word—while they know that it has been in every age the great enemy and bitter and bloody PERSECUTOR of the true followers of Jesus—they did not *dare* to decide that it could not and did not *confer the sacraments of Christ*. Its hands, all reeking with the blood of martyred saints, conferred the *only* baptism which those men ever received who *gave baptism to the Presbyterian Church*; and when they venture to decide that *this* was not and could not be *true* Christian baptism, they, by that act, decide that *they have never been themselves baptized*.

“The facts concerning this discussion should not be forgotten. The question which had been referred to the Assembly for its decision was a very simple one, and to an uninterested spectator would have seemed very easy of solution. It was in substance this: Is baptism and ordination conferred by the Church of Rome valid and lawful *Christian* baptism and ordination? It was referred to a special committee to examine and report. The majority of this committee reported that our standards declare the pope to be *Antichrist*, and the baptism or ordination of Antichrist could *not* be

Christian baptism or Christian ordination. But a majority of the Assembly voted for the indefinite postponement of the whole subject, which was simply a refusal to decide the question either way. And the reasons given for this course were, that if they ventured officially and authoritatively to deny that Rome was a true Church, and her baptisms and ordinations lawful and valid, they would by that act *officially unchurch themselves*, since their own ordinances came to them through Rome. If the baptisms and ordinations of Rome are invalid, then Luther and Calvin were neither baptized nor ordained, and so of all who constituted the first Churches of the Reformation. If they were *unbaptized*, then they were not true Churches, since no company of unbaptized believers, however pious, has ever been regarded as a *Church*. If their ministers were *unordained*, then, according to Presbyterian usage and authority, they had no right to baptize or to ordain others; so the Churches never could have received through them the ordinances of Christ, and therefore must be now without them.

“If they had said, *We cannot tell*: the people would ask them, *Why?* for to the simple common sense of any honest mind it must seem plain as the sunlight that the enemy of Christ, the beast, the dragon, the man of sin, foretold as Antichrist, who should usurp the seat of Christ, and by his assumed authority wear out his saints and destroy his people, could not be Christ’s executive, could not be authorized by HIM to confer HIS sacraments.

“They therefore determined to postpone the further consideration of the whole subject, and *cut all notice of it out of their permanent records, so that the people might forget it*. But the people will *not* forget it. The question will come up again. It *must* be true that popish baptism either is or else that it is *not* true and valid Christian baptism. If it is, then the Roman Catholic is the true Church of Christ,

and they were *excommunicated* in the persons of their founders, the Reformers. If it *is not*, then they came out of an apostate Church, and as it had no power to confer Christian baptism, it could not have given it them, and they had no other. If Roman Catholic popish *ordination* was not true *Christian* ordination, then Luther and Calvin, and the other ministers of that day, were *not ordained*, and if unordained could not ordain others, nor confer Christian baptism. If it *was* true ordination, then Rome was the true Church, and Luther and Calvin and their associates were *deposed* and *excommunicated*, and no longer authorized to act officially, and all their official acts are, therefore, null and void. In either case their followers have *no* baptism, *no* ordination, *no* sacraments, and *no* Church, unless that may be a Church which has no baptism, or that be baptism which is conferred by one who is not a minister, which is contrary to the teaching of the 'Confession of Faith,' page 498, 'Baptism is not to be administered but by a minister of Christ,' etc.

"But we need not dwell on this. We have seen enough to understand that from the very first this Church had not the scriptural characteristics of a true Church of Christ. Let Mr. Percy finish his diagram, and we will pass on to the LUTHERAN CHURCHES.

"We need not stop to examine the Methodist Protestant Church, for it is younger than its mother, whom we have examined, and does not differ from her in any thing essential to our argument. Nor need we give any separate consideration to the Cumberland Presbyterian, of which the same thing is true. And the Lutheran Churches need occupy but little more time than will be necessary to construct the diagram to show at a single glance just what they really are.

"Those in this country are the descendants of those in Europe, and like them, so far as differing circumstances will permit. From them they received their ordinances and their

DIAGRAM OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH.		MARKS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.
1st. It consists only of professed believers in Christ.		It consists of believers and their offspring, and all persons baptized in infancy. See p. 403.
2d. Its members must have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.		The children of Church-members are regarded as members even without baptism at all. P. 403-408
3d. It is a local organization, and independent of all others.		It is a great confederation, of which each local society is but a part. P. 404.
4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.		It is ruled by sessions, by presbyteries, by synods, and a General Assembly. Pp. 405 to 407.
5th. Its members have become such by their own voluntary act.		Its members are most of them <i>born</i> such without their knowledge or consent. P. 403.
6th. It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.		It holds for the most part to all the fundamental doctrines of salvation. P. 408.
7th. It began in the time of Christ, and has continued to the present time.		It is of comparatively modern origin, and came through John Calvin and the Reformers of Geneva out of Rome. The American organization was completed in 1789. P. 409.
8th. It never persecutes for conscience' sake		In Calvin's day, and afterwards in Europe it persecuted, but the American organization proper never has. P. 410.
9th. It must not be an apostate Church.		It was apostate in its origin, as coming out of Rome, and has never had the characteristics of a true Church of Christ. See pp. 411-414.

organization, and if *they* are not true Churches, these cannot be. We need only say of them what we presume their most devoted members will not deny: they not only receive infants as members, but where they have the power, as in Germany and Sweden, *compel* the parents by force of fines and imprisonments to bring their infants to be made members. They cannot, therefore, endure our first two tests, nor yet the fifth or eighth.

“The local societies are not independent, but each makes a part of a confederacy, which, where it is practicable, is coëxtensive with the nation. They have not, therefore, our third mark. And, like the Presbyterians, they are subject to the rule of ecclesiastical assemblies above the local Church, and where it is practicable they are joined to the state, and, like the Church of England, owe subjection to the civil power. Christ is not, therefore, their *only* king and lawgiver. Its confession teaches *baptismal regeneration* as plainly as the Prayer-book of the Church of England, Wesley's Sermons, or the Discipline. And the body of her communicants in Europe (though not in this country) evidently rely upon a sacramental salvation. It did not begin with Christ, but came out of Rome in the time of Martin Luther. It was, like the Church of England, a persecutor in its very beginning, while Luther himself yet lived, and gave direction to its action. And, like those we have examined, though it has not apostatized since it began, it was apostate in its very origin. It has not *lost* the characteristics of a true Church of Christ, because it never had them. It has from the first been destitute of all the characteristics of a true Church but *one*: it did at one time hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and many of its members do hold them still.”

“I can hardly feel satisfied,” said Theodosia, “with the character you have given us of Luther. He may have been led into occasional acts of violence, but that he was a system-

DIAGRAM OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

SIGNS OR MARKS OF A
TRUE CHURCH.

1st.

It consists only of pro-
fessed believers in Christ.

2d.

Its members must have
been baptized upon a pro-
fession of their faith in
Christ.

3d.

It is a local organiza-
tion, and independent of
all others.

4th.

It has Christ alone for
its King and Lawgiver,
and recognizes no author-
ity but his above its own.

5th.

Its members were made
such by their own volun-
tary act.

6th.

It holds as articles of
faith the fundamental
doctrines of the gospel.

7th.

It began in the time of
Christ, and has continued
to the present time.

8th.

It never persecutes for
conscience' sake.

9th.

It cannot be a Church
that has apostatized.

MARKS OF THE LUTHERAN
CHURCH.

It consists, so far as prac-
ticable, like the Church
of England, of the whole
population, made mem-
bers by baptism in their
infancy.

Its members have most-
ly been made in infancy,
before they knew there
was a Christ.

Each society is but a
part of a great ecclesi-
astical establishment.

It is subject to ecclesi-
astical judicatories, and in
Germany, where it origin-
ated, and in Sweden, is
connected with the state.

Its members are made
such in infancy, and,
where it has the power,
by compulsion of the law.

It once held to salva-
tion by faith alone. Some
of its members do so still,
but its standards teach
baptismal regeneration,
and many of its members
trust to the sacraments
for salvation.

It began with Martin
Luther, and came out of
Rome.

It persecuted even in
Luther's day; and in
every country where it
has the power, it fines and
imprisons *Baptists* to the
present day. Pp. 416-422.

It was, as coming out
of Rome, apostate in its
origin, and never has had
the marks of a true
Church.

atic and deliberate *persecutor*, or that he sanctioned by his precepts or example the claims of those who have since endeavored to compel men to receive his doctrines by the penalties of the civil law, I can hardly believe."

"Luther," said Mr Courtney, "was a very great and, in some respects, a very good man; and his persecution of others serves to show how very far good men and wise men may go astray from the requirements of God's word, even while they hold and teach that it, and it alone, is to be the guide of every man, both as regards his faith and practice.

"I wish this blot were not upon his name. I wish that neither he nor Calvin had procured the death of others, for doing what they themselves had done and commended; that is, for simply thinking and deciding *for themselves* in regard to the teachings of the Word concerning their religious faith and practice. We may excuse them *if* we can, or *as* we can; but the *facts* are recorded in letters of blood, and must remain for ever a perpetual monument of the truth that the Churches founded by either one or the other were not and could not be true Churches of Christ; since they both began in blood; and when they had the power to wield the secular sword, did not spare to plunge it to the heart of those who ventured to read the Scriptures for themselves, *and differ from their masters*.

"But if you doubt about the facts, you will find an admirable summary of them in Luther's case recorded in 'Orchard's History of the Foreign Baptists,' and sustained by references to the most reliable historical authorities:

"'Luther had no great objection to the Baptists in his early efforts. He encouraged the Muncer of notoriety, who was a Baptist minister, and so highly esteemed by Luther as to be named his Absalom. Their united efforts greatly increased persons of the Baptist persuasion. When the news reached Luther of Carolstadt rebaptizing, [that is, baptizing

those that had only received popish baptism,] that Muncer had won the hearts of the people, and that the Reformation was going on in his absence; he, on the 6th of March, 1522, flew like lightning from his confinement, at the hazard of his life, and without the advice of his patron, to put a stop to Carolstadt's proceedings. (*Maclean's Mosheim*, vol. iii., p. 45) On his return to Wittenburg, he banished Carolstadt, Pelargus, More, Didymus, and others, and only received Melancthon again. (*Irimey*.) . . . The success and number of the Baptists exasperated him to the last degree. He became their enemy, notwithstanding all he had said in favor of dipping, (while he contended with Catholics on the sufficiency of the word of God;) but now he persecuted them under the name of *re-dippers*, *rebaptizers*, or *Anabaptists* . . . His half measures, his national system, his using the Roman liturgy, his consubstantiation, his infant baptism, without Scripture or example, were disliked by the Baptists. Yea, the Picards or Vaudois hated his system, and he hated all other sects.' (Pp. 344, 345.)

"And again: 'The tones of authority assumed by Luther, and his magisterial conduct towards those who differed from him, made it evident that he would be the *head* of the Reformers.' (*Robinson's Researches*, p. 542.) He and his colleagues had now to dispute their way with hosts of Baptists all over Germany, Saxony, Thuringia, Switzerland, and other kingdoms, for several years. Conferences on baptism were held in different kingdoms, which continued from 1516 to 1527. The support which the Baptists had from Luther's writings made the Reformers' efforts of little effect. At Zurich, the [Lutheran] Senate warned the people to desist from the practice of rebaptizing; but all their warnings were in vain. These efforts to check the increase of Baptists being ineffectual, carnal measures were selected. The first edict against Anabaptism was published at Zurich, in 1522. in

which there was a penalty of a silver mark set upon all such as should suffer themselves to be baptized, or should withhold baptism from their children. And it was further declared that those who openly opposed this order should be more severely treated. (*Ger. Brandt's Hist. Ref.*, vol. i., b ii., p. 57.) This being insufficient to check immersion, the Senate decreed, like Honorius in 413, that all persons who professed Anabaptism, or harbored the professors of the doctrine, should be punished with *death by drowning*. (*Miln. Ch. Hist.*, chap. xvi. *Neal's Hist.*, vol. v., p. 127.) It had been death to refuse baptism, and now it was death to be baptized. Such is the weathercock uncertainty of state religion. In defiance of this law, the Baptists persevered in their regular discipline; and some ministers of learned celebrity realized the severity of the sentence. MANY BAPTISTS WERE DROWNED AND BURNT. (*Milner, Brandt, Ivimey.*) These severe measures, which continued for years, *had the consent of the Reformers*, which injured greatly the Lutheran cause. (*Rob. Res.*, p. 543.) It was the cruel policy of Papacy inflicted by brethren. Wherever the Baptists settled, Luther played the part of a universal bishop, and wrote to princes and senates to engage them to expel such dangerous men.' "

"But was it not against the so-called madmen or fanatics of Munster, commonly called Anabaptists, that these severe measures were directed? Was it not against the disturbers of the public peace, rather than those who held to adverse sentiments in religion, that these sanguinary measures were directed?"

"Not at all, madam. All this was years *before* the Munster rising; and consequently could have had no reference to that affair. These laws were passed in 1522. In 1525 there was an insurrection of the peasants, but they were *Papists*, and not Baptists. In 1529, Erasmus, the friend of

Luther, said of the Anabaptists, (that is, those whom we now call Baptists,) '*These persons are worthy of greater commendation than others, on account of the harmlessness of their lives; but they are oppressed by all other sects.*' And it was not till 1535 that the famous rising at Munster occurred. The disturbances began two years before, (see *Orchard*, p. 361,) between Lutherans and Papists; and 'while things were in this confused state, some persons of a fanatical character came into Munster, who gave out that they were messengers from heaven, invested with a Divine commission to lay the foundations of a new government, a holy and spiritual empire, and destroy and overturn all temporal rule and authority, all human and political institutions.'

"These were the people who are called Anabaptists by the historians of those times; and whose excesses and fanatical proceedings were the occasion of great distress to the Baptists in the succeeding years, and of much reproach to the denomination even to the present time; and yet it does not appear that they had more than one single article of faith or practice in common with those with whom they have been so generally confounded. They were no more Baptists than the *Mormons* of our day are Baptists. The Mormons immerse those whom they receive into their community, and the Baptists immerse those whom they receive; yet the Mormons and the Baptists are very far from being the same people. So it was with these madmen of Munster: they *baptized anew* all who came from other sects to them, and so do Baptists rebaptize, if infant sprinkling is to be counted baptism; but here the resemblance ceases. 'They were for repeating even *adult* baptism, not performed among them; yea, that which was administered among themselves when they removed from one society to another; nay, even in the same community when an excommunicated person was received again. Besides, if what is reported of them is true, as it may be, their baptism was performed by

sprinkling, which we cannot allow to be true baptism. It is said that when a community of them was satisfied with the person's faith and conversation who proposed himself for baptism, the pastor took water into his hand and sprinkled it on the head of him who was to be baptized, using these words: *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*' See *Ivimey*, vol. i., p. 15.

"But whether these madmen were Baptists or not, it was not against *them* that these bloody laws were passed, at the request of Luther; for they were made, and many by their authority were drowned and burnt, before the disturbances at Munster had been dreamed of. And under similar laws, our brethren are liable to-day to suffer persecution in every nation where the Lutheran Church by union with the state has power to persecute."

"But what do you say to the so-called CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, which are scattered throughout our country?" asked the Rev. Mr. Stiptain. "Do they come up to your high standard, or rather *down* to your *low* standard?"

"They come nearer to it than any we have examined," said Mr. Courtney, "but yet they are not true Churches. In so far as they make members of little babes, they cannot have our *first*, *second*, or *fifth* mark. They have the *third* and *fourth*, and some of them the *sixth*, though many hold to a sort of sacramental salvation; and some have fallen into Unitarianism, and denied the Lord that bought them.

"Consisting, as they do, of professed believers, and *their children*, they are not full examples of the Church founded by Christ, for the first Churches, as we have seen, were not composed of such materials; and, therefore, they have not the *seventh*.

"Some of them, in the early settlement of New England, were bitter persecutors of the Baptists and the Quakers; and *they*, at least, had not the *eighth*. And as they all received

their baptism and ordinances from the hands of those who had no other than the ordinances of the apostate Roman Church, and, moreover, have *none* of them had *all* the characteristics of a true Church at any period of their existence, we will be obliged to count them as we have the other claimants, as apostate *in their very origin.*"

"It seems to me," said the Rev. Mr. Stiptain, "that you have now wound yourself up so completely in the web of your own tests, that you can never get out. You have already cut off almost all that claim to be the Church of Christ, and unhurched almost the whole of Christendom; and if you apply your rules, and require that a true Church shall be in *all* respects what those tests call for, you will cut off every other; and it must follow that Christ has now no Church on earth, and never has had since the great Roman apostasy. The Greek Church, and the Armenian, can, of course, expect no more favor than the Roman Catholic and the English, and not quite so much as the Presbyterian, and the Methodist, and Lutheran."



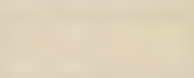
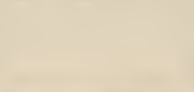


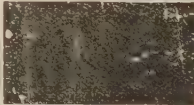


"As they do not belong to this country," replied Mr. Courtney, "we will not need specifically to consider their claims, except we should fail to find any example of a true Church here."

"You are not hopeless then? Well, I trust you may succeed; but, for my own part, I can see no prospect of your doing so. It is time for us to return home; but if you will all come over to my house on Monday, I will gladly do what I can to help you look, and would like to be present at the finding," said the Rev. Mr. Stiptain.

"If you will go to meeting with us to-morrow," said Theodosia, "perhaps we may be able to show it to you."

"I cannot do that, as I must attend my own appointment; but we expect you all to dine with us on Monday, and tell us what you have seen. If it is a Church which has

DIAGRAM OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.		MARKS OF THE CONGREGA- TIONAL CHURCHES.
1st. It consists only of pro- fessed believers in Christ.		They consist in part of the baptized children of believers.
2d. Its members must have been baptized upon a pro- fession of their faith.		If sprinkling or pour- ing is not baptism, they have not been baptized at all, and if at all, not on profession, but in their infancy.
3d. It is a local organiza- tion, and independent of all others.		Each Church controls its own affairs, and makes no part of any ecclesiasti- cal establishment.
4th. It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and owns no authority but his above its own.		It is not responsible to any Lord but Christ, and knows no laws but his.
5th. Its members have be- come such by their own voluntary act.		Its members were most- ly made such before they could know what was done to them.
6th. It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.		Some do hold the true doctrines, and some have Unitarianism, and some sacramental salvation, baptismal regeneration, etc.
7th. It began in the time of Christ, and has continued ever since.		The Church which be- gan with Christ had no in- fant or involuntary mem- bers. These, therefore, cannot be examples of it.
8th. It never persecutes for conscience' sake.		Some of them have per- secuted, most of them never had the power, and now would have no dis- position to do it.
9th. No apostate Church can be a true Church of Christ.		They were apostate in their origin, having never had all the characteris- tics essential to a true Church.

all your marks, I am almost willing to promise to join it myself."

This was on Saturday evening. The Doctor had been accustomed to go into the city upon the Sabbath to the Episcopal church; but, in compliment to his guests, he had ascertained that it was the time of the regular monthly meeting at a little Baptist meeting-house not far from his residence, and had determined to go there.

The services had already begun, and they were singing the first hymn when our party arrived. After singing, the pastor read a portion of the Scriptures in a plain and simple manner, and then offered an extemporaneous prayer in a subdued and earnest voice, which showed by its natural and beseeching tones that he was in solemn earnest, as he plead with God that he and his people might not only be led to know but heartily to do the will of God as made known to us in his most blessed word.

Then, after another hymn had been read and sung, not by a choir, but by the whole congregation, he commenced his sermon.

Up to this time, the attention of Dr. Thinkwell had been somewhat distracted by the contrast which the rude and simple building, the uncarpeted aisles, the uncushioned and unpainted pews, or rather benches, and the unfashionable and cheap attire of most of the hearers, presented to the luxurious and tasteful adornments of his city church. Nor was the contrast less striking between the free and natural outpourings of the heart in earnest and simple words of praise and prayer, and the artistic musical parade, and the formal reading to God a select portion of the Prayer-book.

But from the moment that the preacher announced his text there was no more wandering of his mind. There was a strange fascination in the tones of his low yet most intensely earnest voice, and in the gaze of his large eyes—which, instead

of being fixed upon his manuscript, seemed to be looking right into the very souls of those who sat before him—that at once enchained all his faculties in an attitude of undivided attention. The subject, too, was one in which, just at this time, he could not but feel a most absorbing interest :

AVOIDABLE IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE FOR ERROR OR
FOR SIN.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—PROV. xiv. 12.

The preacher began by saying, “It is a common opinion, that it matters little what a man believes, if he is only *sincere*; and that it is of not much consequence what he *does*, so that he does what he *thinks* to be right. But such is not the teaching of the word of God; and however plausible it may seem at the first glance, it has no more foundation in reason than it has in Scripture. Reason as well as revelation requires right faith, right opinions, and right conduct, since ignorance will no more excuse a man, or procure for him an exemption from punishment, if he break the *natural* laws of God, than if he violate his *moral* obligations. To illustrate this, take an event in common life.

“A merchant was about to venture on a distant voyage. He had been reared on the land, and knew but little of the perils of the sea. His mind had been engaged in other studies, and he knew little of the art of navigation, or of the qualities and capabilities of ships. He trusted to his *agent* to purchase and equip the vessel, and to employ the officers and crew. He sent on board his precious freight, designed for traffic in the distant lands; and when all was ready, one lovely summer day he went on board himself, and a fair and gentle breeze wafted them quickly out to sea. O, it was delightful to sit upon the vessel’s deck, and gaze abroad far as the eye could reach upon the bright expanse of waters; to mark the ripple

of the waves, and watch the parting foam about the prow, which told how fast they were progressing towards their destined port. O, it was grand to watch the setting sun sink slowly down until he almost rested his glowing cheek upon the placid ocean, sending across its surface the gorgeous yellow light which, mingling with the waters, caused them to resemble that wondrous vision of the Revelation, 'a sea of glass mingled with gold.'

"It was a glorious sight, when the sun was gone and the red twilight had faded, to look up and see the stars of God come out, one after another, and take their places in the blue canopy of heaven, till all the sky was bright with twinkling glory, and then to look down and see another heaven reflected in the deep—not still and quiet as the one above, but trembling in the gently-moving flood—'As if each wave had leaped up to the sky and caught a star, and held it struggling in its cold embrace.'

"The wind is fair, and only strong enough to waft them on in safety. The merchant is happy; he feels that he is on the way to fortune. He sleeps in quiet; no dream of storms, of rushing waters, of great sea-monsters, and dark caverns in the bottom of the deep, disturb his slumber. He counts his gains, he builds his splendid house, he spreads his sumptuous feast, he enjoys the applause of his numerous friends. He is a rich and consequently a great and a happy man. Such is his pleasant dream.

"But while he sleeps the wind has lulled. That deep and ominous stillness, which to the sailors' watchful senses always forebodes the storm, has spread itself over the sea. The sails flap idly on the mast. The ship rocks lazily in the slight swell of the subsiding waves.

"The man upon the lookout sees a little cloud. It rises and spreads with a thousand strange fantastic shapes. All hands are called to fit the vessel for the coming storm, and scarcely

have they done so when down it comes, screaming and howling across the waves. He hears its shrieks as it tears its way through the rigging of the vessel; he starts from his pleasant dream of wealth and grandeur; he rushes out to see what is the cause of all the commotion which has startled him.

"The storm is upon them in all its terrible strength; but if his ship were sound, if his officers were competent and his sailors true, there is no danger, for the sea is wide. There is no hidden rock, and there is no danger of running ashore; set her before the wind, and let her drift. But now, for the first time, he discovers that his vessel is old, her timbers sprung, her planks rotten, and the first blow of the storm has opened her seams so that the water rushes in on every side. He finds that the officers, incompetent and timid, have lost all presence of mind, and know no more what to do than he does himself.

"Now tell me, will God hold back the wind? Will God sustain the vessel? Will God preserve the merchant or his wealth because he verily *thought in his heart* that his agent had been honest, that his officers were skilful, that his ship was sound, and all things safe?

- Never! never! The natural laws will have their course. The ship goes down at sea: fishes feed upon the men who risked their lives so heedlessly, and her rich freight is added to the treasures of the deep. God will not change his laws because the man was ignorant of them, or because he disregarded them. If he would have gone *safely*, he should have provided securely. His vessel should have been staunch, and his officers competent. He may have *thought* they were so; but to insure his safety, *they must have been so in fact*.

"So in the gospel of salvation, God requires certain conditions to be fulfilled in order to make safe the voyage of life. If he would reach the haven of the sons of God, become a king and priest in the heavenly Jerusalem, he must comply with the conditions of the gospel. It is not enough for him to do what

he thinks right; he must do what *is right in fact*. It is not enough for him to *think* that he does right, but he must *actually* do it. If he risks his deathless soul in any other vessel than the good 'old ship of Zion,' if he sails under any other officer than Jesus, the true and only Captain of our salvation, he has no right to hope that he will escape the storms and tempests of God's wrath. It is not enough that he *means* to go safely; it is not enough that he *thinks* he is safe; it is not enough that he really *believes that he is* in the gospel ship and *has Jesus* for his Captain—it *must be so* as a matter of actual fact. If he deceives himself, or is deceived by Satan, or deluded by his spiritual advisers, it matters not how honest or how confident may be his conviction that he is safe. His hopes may be as bright, his confidence as firm, and his conscience as easy as that of the real Christian—his sun may shine brightly, his breeze may seem fair, the sea gentle and calm; but when the dark clouds rise, when God appears in the thick darkness of his anger, and blows upon him with the horrible tempest of his wrath, 'then the *expectation of the wicked shall perish, and his hope shall be like the giving up of the ghost.*'

"But we are not left to infer this doctrine from what we see in nature: God teaches it, as plainly and as forcibly as words can speak, in every part of the Scriptures of truth.

"The Bible gives no license to men to set up their *own* standard of duty or of faith, of doctrine or of practice. It is the common complaint of the Scriptures against those whom God condemns, that they walked every one according to the imagination of *his own heart*; that they followed after *their own* devices. They substituted other things for the commandments of God. They may have been *sincere*; they may have been *honest*; they may have *thought* they were right: 'For there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the

end thereof are the ways of death.' But it is not enough *that* the way *seems* right, it must *be* right in fact. It must not only *seem* right in *their* sight, but it must *be* right in the sight of God.

"His language is, 'If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in *his* sight.' Exod. xv. 16. And again, 'Thou shalt do that which is right and good *in the sight of the Lord*, that it may be well with thee.' Deut. vi. 18. And again, 'Ye shall not do after all that ye do this day, every man what is right in *his own eyes*.' Deut. xii. 8. 'Thou shalt observe and do all *these words which I command thee*, . . . that it may be well with thee when thou doest that *which is right in the sight of the LORD THY GOD*.' Deut. xii. 28.

"God requires certain express and specific acts as the condition of salvation. If man substitutes some contrivance of his own, however honest may be his conviction of the efficacy of the substitute, he will assuredly perish. It may *seem* right, but the end thereof are the ways of *death*.

"God says, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' And, to show the *nature* of the faith, he further says, 'that it works by love and purifies the heart;' that 'If any man be in Christ,' by this faith, 'he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things have become new.' 'Except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God.' This is *God's way*.

"But *man* says, 'If you will confess to the priest, and perform penance, you shall be saved.' Another says, 'If you will be sprinkled in your infancy, and confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the bishop when you are so many years of age, and keep all the outward *forms* and ordinances of the Church, as set forth in the *Book of Common Prayer*, you shall be saved.' Another says, 'You have no more to do but to go before the Church, declare your belief that Jesus is the

Son of God, be *immersed* in the baptismal waters, and *so wash away your sins*, and you shall be saved '

"Others, rejecting even the outward and external form of godliness, as well as denying the power thereof, say, 'It is enough that you are correct in your general deportment; that you do not steal, or lie, or cheat, or swear; that you are no murderer or extortioner, nor guilty of any vile, abominable, and outrageous sins. It is enough, in short, that you are a moral and a respectable man.'

"Thus men substitute their *own devices* for God's *requirements*. Thus they forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. Thus they make the gospel of God of no effect, by their own contrivances. They may be *honest*, they may be *sincere*: they may *really think* and be fully persuaded that in these 'things they have eternal life; but it is still true that he that believeth not on the Son of God shall *perish*. It is still true that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. It is still true that except a man be born again he shall not see the kingdom of God. It is still true that he who is not renewed in the temper and disposition of his mind; who does not live soberly, and righteously, and godly—denying himself all ungodliness and every worldly lust—trusting in Christ, and in him only, for salvation, shall not be saved. *This is God's way*. God's way is the way of penitence and of faith. God's way is the way of love and of obedience. No human substitute will answer in the place of this 'Thou requirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'

"Man may imagine that many things would be agreeable to God, and would propitiate his favor, but God will *himself* dictate his own terms of peace; and we have nothing to *do* but to follow, implicitly, the *very letter of his commandments*

While we do this we are safe. When we go beyond this, or fall short of this, or turn aside from this, we are in great danger of the wrath of God.

“‘If any man,’ says John, ‘shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.’

“‘What things soever,’ said God to his people, ‘I command you, observe to do it. Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom.’ And you will find, by examination of the word of God, that some of the most remarkable and most terrible inflictions of summary punishment by the direct interference of the hand of God were for sins of thoughtlessness, forgetfulness, or ignorance; cases in which the offenders might very plausibly have pleaded that they meant no harm; if, indeed, they may not have claimed that they really thought they were doing God service.

“Look at the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. God had brought his people out of Egypt, and had led them through the wilderness to the foot of Sinai. There he gave them his law, and there he instructed Moses in what manner he should order the visible worship of God.

“As they were yet to wander many years, they could build no permanent temple; but in its place they had erected a most extensive and magnificent *tent*, which they called the tabernacle, or tent of the congregation. Its curtains were of blue, and purple, and fine-twined linen and needle-work, so arranged that it could be easily set up and taken down, and carried with them in their journeys. Within it was the ark of the covenant, covered with gold; the mercy-seat of pure gold, the cherubims of gold overshadowing it with their wings; the table and the bowls and dishes, spoons and

vessels, all of gold. There was the golden candlestick, the golden altar of incense, and the great altar of burnt-offering, overlaid with brass. All now were finished; so were the splendid garments of the priests—of blue and purple and needlework, woven in with gold; the ephod, the breastplate, and the signet, all were complete. And Moses had set all in order: had consecrated Aaron and his sons; and now, for the first time, the regular daily sacrifice was to be offered up according to the ordinance of God, which was to be repeated till the great Sacrifice should come.

“When Aaron, assisted by his sons, had offered it, he lifted up his hand towards the people and blessed them. God accepted the sacrifice, and showed himself with most peculiar glory in the sight of all the people. And there came fire from before the Lord and consumed the offering upon the altar.

“The people had been gazing on this scene with the most intense interest. It was a time of wonderful things with them, and this was not the least wonderful. When they saw it they shouted, and fell on their faces in adoration of the God who had thus accepted their early worship.

“All this was well. Thus far all had been done *as God commanded Moses*, and farther than this he had *not* commanded. But two of Aaron's sons took each of them a censurer, and would make an *additional* offering, which the Lord commanded *not*, strange fire which God had not directed or required. *They* were priests as well as Aaron. *They* had been sanctified and consecrated at the same time that he was; and they might have thought that while the people were in a devotional frame it would be well to continue the worship a little longer, and give it some slight variety. God had *not forbidden* it, and they might not see any harm in it. But no sooner did they wave their censers before the Lord than God smote them, and they died. Fire came out from

before the Lord, and devoured them there in the sight of all the people.

"A similar event happened to Uzzah some ages afterwards. The same ark which was here for the first time placed in the tabernacle had been carried about with the people in all their wanderings. It had stood in Jordan while the people filed past it on their entrance into Canaan. It had remained there in the place which God appointed, until, for the wickedness of the people, God gave them into the hand of their enemies, and the ark of God was taken. God afflicted the Philistines. They were so much distressed, that of their own accord they sent it home. The cattle which drew it stopped on the borders of Israel, at Bethshemesh; and some years after David the king went to bring it up to his own city with a splendid retinue of thirty thousand chosen men, the flower of his army. They set the ark upon a new cart and brought it out. And when they came to a rough place in the road, the oxen shook the ark, and Uzzah thought it was about to fall, and he put forth his hand and took hold of it to steady it; forgetting that, according to God's law, none but a priest might touch it, and even a priest only after such purification and preparation as God had commanded; and for this forgetfulness, for acting on the impulse of the moment, and touching with unhallowed hand the ark of God, God smote him that he died.

"And a much more fearful punishment than this was inflicted upon the people of Bethshemesh, where the ark stopped first on its way home from the land of the Philistines.

"The people received it with *great joy*, and offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings, but there were some whose unhallowed curiosity led them familiarly to *look* into the ark. They were probably not conscious of any great crime. It was a strange sight; they had never seen the like before.

they might never have another opportunity; and what great harm could there be in simply looking into the ark to see if possible what was the secret of its wondrous power? Yet for this, God smote them that they died, even fifty thousand and seventy men; and the people of Bethshemesh said, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?'

"Another instance teaching the same great lesson is to be found in the history of Saul. True, the punishment was not immediate death, as in the other cases; but it was the departure of the favor of God, the loss of his kingdom, and his final death by the hands of the Philistines.

"This history may be found in the fifteenth chapter of first Samuel.

"God sent Samuel the prophet to Saul the king with an express and positive command, 'Go, smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' Saul might have thought the command unreasonable. He might have pretended to be more merciful than his Maker, as some infidels have done since his day, and said that it seemed hard and cruel; but he could not and did not fail to understand the nature and extent of the commandment.

"He set himself with great earnestness to carry it into execution. He gathered an army of more than two hundred thousand, and set out on his mission. They smote the Amalekites with a great slaughter; but so far from doing *all* that God commanded, he spared Agag the king, and all the best of the cattle.

"And Saul returned again to Samuel and said, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.'

"He thought he had really done all *that was important*

which the command required. He had slain the people, wasted their country, and had only saved a few sheep and cattle, and even these he spared for a religious purpose.

“‘The Lord,’ said Samuel, ‘sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, *utterly* destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?’

“And Saul said, ‘Yea, I *have* obeyed the voice of the Lord, and *have* gone the way which the Lord sent me, and *have* brought Agag the king of the Amalekites, and *have* utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, *to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.*’

“Now, what said the answer of God to him? Was it sufficient that he had done all that *he* thought *important*, and in the trifle that he left undone he had so good a motive? Was it enough to say he had done what *he thought was for the best*? No such thing. ‘Nay,’ said Samuel, ‘hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in *obeying the voice of the Lord*? Behold, to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* is better than the fat of rams; for *rebellion* is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee from being king.’

“Thus does God teach, both by precept and example, that what he requires is simple obedience to his commandments; that which is right in itself, right in point of fact, *right in the sight of God*; and not what sinful, ignorant, fallible *man* may *fally* believe to be right.

“God requires *right* faith, *right* opinions, *right* views of duty, and *right* practice. And he does not leave us to

blunder on in the dim light of *our own* conceptions of duty, but requires us to come up to the truth of the gospel, and walk in the glorious sunlight of *his revelation*.

“He requires us to exert our reason, to employ our talents, to use our learning, and by every means which he has placed at our command *to learn what is the true meaning of the Word*; but when we can once learn what *God commands*, no reason of expediency, no suggestion of propriety, no authority of Church or state, of kings or bishops, priests or pastors, can justify even a momentary departure from the *very letter of his requirements*.

“We may not substitute our reasonings for simple faith, or our self-will for unquestioning obedience. We may not see any good *reason* for the command; but it is not our province to ask *why* God commands, but only to inquire if he *does* command. We may *think* we see strong and numerous reasons *in opposition* to what he ordains; but it is not *our* place to sit in judgment on our Maker. We are but creatures of a day, and we know nothing. *He* is the infinitely wise God, and knows *all* things. Our business is not to *question*, but simply to *obey*. *This is, in fact, the HIGHEST REASON*. For if God governs his rational and moral creatures at all, it is as a moral governor. He takes cognizance of their character as right or wrong. His government is a government of law; and being infinitely wise and good, *he cannot make a law which is not infinitely right*; and, of course, *any substitute* for it must of *necessity* be wrong, however better it may *seem* to our weak and sinful reason. If God is wiser, and holier, and better than *we* are, then it is in accordance with the highest reason that we should do what is right in *his* sight, and *not* what is right in *our own* sight, or what would *seem* best according to *our* judgment. It follows, then, that if he has required that all believers shall be immersed, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; if *this* is the act which was performed by

John upon the Saviour; if *this* was the act performed by his own disciples, under his direction, when the Pharisees heard that he made and baptized more disciples than John; if *this* is the act which he directed his disciples to perform on all who should believe even to the end of the world, there must be the best of reasons for it; and who will have the temerity to say that it is *inconvenient*; that it is not *genteel*, that it is *indelicate*; or that from *any other cause it is IMPROPER, and may be dispensed with?* Have men grown better and wiser than their Saviour? Are they more sensitive to any impropriety or any indelicacy than the immaculate Son of God? Will they venture to *change* the ordinance of *God*, and make the command of *God* of no effect by their *extreme gentility?*

“If *God* commands immersion, will *men* pretend to say that sprinkling or pouring a little water on the head is *better*, because it better *symbolizes* what *God* meant to represent? as though they could tell better than *God* himself what was the most fitting emblem of the thing which baptism was meant to signify.

“If *God* commands immersion, and the apostles and early Christians practiced it; if pouring first, and sprinkling afterwards, were substituted in its place by man, by the authority of popes, and cardinals, and bishops, who will have the hardihood, when he has been informed that such is indeed the fact, to continue to obey *man* rather than *God*? O, not for worlds would I take such responsibility upon my soul. And whether it be either right or *wise* to obey man rather than *God*, judge ye.

“If *God* commands to baptize *only believers*, who will have the presumption to add their infant children also to the law? We may see a hundred reasons for it; but if *God* *commanded* it not, do we not stand on the same ground with Nadab and Abihu? To the law and to the testimony: if it

we not according to this word, if it be not *in the commandment*, who will venture to perform in the name of the Lord that which he hath not required at your hand?

“If God has instituted *only ONE ORDER of pastors or ministers* of his word, and has placed them all on an equality, who will have the audacity to lord it over God’s heritage? to set up a class of bishops above their fellows, to rule and govern in the Church of God according to *their* sovereign will and pleasure?

“If God placed the spiritual authority *in the Churches*, in the assemblies of believers; if *they* are authorized to receive members, or to expel, who will undertake to improve upon *his* plan, and place the authority in the hands of sessions of ministers, of class-leaders, of priests, of deacons, of bishops, or popes? *Men* may see *many reasons* of convenience or propriety for one course or another; but *they* have no right to think what is most convenient; *they* have no right to think what is most proper; *they* have no right to think what is best fitted to any particular people, or any particular time. All they should dare to do, all they have any right to do, is to determine WHAT DID GOD ORDAIN; *what was the teaching of JESUS CHRIST the King*; what was the practice of the apostles and those whom they instructed.

“Do not tell me that these are trifles—that they are non-essentials. The word of God knows nothing of any *trifling commandment of Almighty God*. I know nothing of any *non-essential* which makes any part or parcel of God’s laws. Who authorized *you* to determine what part of God’s commandment is essential, and what is non-essential? If God thought any thing sufficiently important to mention it in his law, who authorized *you* to say that it is *not* sufficiently important to require your obedience? Surely you are not wiser than the Omniscient! Shall I set up my puny intellect, and try

to grasp the eternal bearings of the most trifling precept of God's law?

"But the very expression '*unessential*' is, in this connection, a fearful perversion of language; since *what God has once commanded* becomes, from that very fact, most tremendously essential, for it is terribly essential that God shall be implicitly obeyed. Saul thought, if he slew the people he might spare the cattle. They had not sinned, and it could not be very important about them. This was to him, it seems, a *non-essential*; but it lost him the favor of God; it lost him his kingdom, and cost him his life. It was not for *him* to say what he must do, and what he might leave undone. God meant what he said; he meant *all* he said. He had doubtless a good reason for every part of the commandment, whether Saul could see it or not. It was not for Saul to inquire for reasons; God's command is enough, *without* reasons; God's command is enough, *against* reasons; or, rather, God's command is of itself the highest conceivable reason for every thing, small or great, which he commands. Never tell me then of essentials, or unessentials. Every thing that God commands is of necessity essential. *There is, there can be, no such thing as an unessential in the religion of the Bible.* If it is *not commanded*, it makes *no* part of religion. If it *is* commanded, it is not for you, or me, or any mortal man on earth, or any angel in the court of heaven, to say that it is unimportant and need not be observed.

"Let us then, my hearers, be careful that we conform both in our religious experience and in our Church order to the very letter and spirit of the law of God. And to do this with any assurance that we *are* doing it, each man must study for himself this holy book. Here is the law; here is the ordinance. What is not here may be indeed a non-essential. But if it *be* here, we may not question; we need not ask for

reasons; we may not conform to the counsels of priests or of pastors; we want no argument of convenience or propriety for or against. It is enough for us that we can find a 'thus saith the Lord.' But at the same time it is right and necessary that we should not only look but *search* for the true meaning of God's word. The Saviour says not, *Read* the Scriptures, but '*Search* the Scriptures,' examining with the greatest care and most intense scrutiny. Dig in its mines of wealth, as for hidden treasures; avail yourselves of all the helps within your reach; compare scripture with scripture; obtain the sense of the word as it was written in the original language, so far as it is practicable to do so; and learn it not to gratify a prurient curiosity, but simply *that you may obey*. Let the language of your heart and of your life be, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' 'All that the Lord hath said, that we will obey.' 'Ye shall not do that which is right in your *own* eyes, or in the eyes of priests, pastors, teachers or bishops, cardinals or popes; but ye shall do according to *this commandment*—that which is right in the sight of the Lord thy God, that it may be well with you, that you may live and not die.'

"God grant us all obedient hearts, and a true knowledge of his way, for Christ's sake! Amen."

When the preacher had finished his discourse, he remarked that there was some business requiring the action of the Church. While the congregation sang a hymn he came down from the pulpit, and took his place as president or chairman of the Church-meeting, and announced that at the last meeting a certain brother had been found guilty of unchristian conduct, and he had been instructed to see and converse with him, and ascertain whether he showed any symptoms of repentance, and induce him, if possible, to appear before the Church, and make such confession as would remove

the scandal of his offences from the Church. He had seen and conversed with him, but he pertinaciously refused to make any acknowledgment of wrong, or to appear before the Church.

"I move, then," said an aged brother, "that we, as a Church, formally withdraw from him our fellowship, and count him as no longer one of us."

The motion being duly seconded, and briefly discussed, was unanimously carried, and the clerk so entered it upon his record.

"If there are any persons present," said the pastor, "who desire to unite with us by letter from other Churches, or by profession of their faith and baptism, let them come forward while we sing."

One young man came up and took a seat near the chairman. He was much affected by the responsibility which attended the act he was about to perform, and could not restrain his tears.

When the singing had ceased, the pastor remarked, probably for the information of the strangers who were present, and who might be presumed to be ignorant of Baptist usage, That the word of God required but one prerequisite for admission into the visible kingdom and Church of Christ, and that was *personal and saving faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour*. But as—according to Romans xiv 1, "Him that is weak in faith receive ye"—it is the duty of the Church to decide whether they have this faith, and not to reject any, even though their faith be weak, so it is the duty of the Church to refuse those whom she may judge to have *no* faith. We are, therefore, accustomed to require of those who ask admission among us such an explanation of their views and feelings, and such an account of their religious experience, as will enable the Church to judge whether they truly have any portion of that real and saving faith which works by love, and purifies the

heart and brings forth good fruit in the life. This is the more needful, since persons are often self-deceived, mistaking a temporary concern about their soul's salvation for genuine conversion to God, and the regeneration of the Spirit. We do not receive people into the Church or baptize them in order that they may be born again, and made the children of God; but because they give us satisfactory evidence that they have already been born of God, already belong to Christ, and are already qualified, by their love to him and to his people and his cause, to take part in the privileges and responsibilities of his visible kingdom. Baptism is with us a mere formal, official, and public *recognition* of a previously existing fact, which is symbolized in the ordinance, namely, that the person baptized has died unto sin, as Christ died for him, and has arisen to a new life of righteousness, as Christ came forth from death.

He then proceeded to ask the young man such questions as would elicit the evidence of his conversion to God. And when his answers were not loud enough to be heard by all the Church, he repeated the substance of them, so that all might be capable of judging.

When he was satisfied for himself, he inquired if any member wished to ask any thing more; and, as no one spoke, a motion was made and seconded, to the effect that the pastor be authorized to baptize him, and that after his baptism he be received as a member of the Church. The votes being taken, and found unanimous, the congregation adjourned to the neighboring stream, and there he was baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and on coming up from the water, the members gave him at once the right hand of fellowship, in token that henceforth they counted him as one of themselves.

Scarcely a word was spoken by our little party as they returned home. The solemn scene which they had witnessed

called up to the minds of Mr. Percy and Theodosia a crowding host of sad yet tender and pleasing recollections and emotions, which could find no utterance in words. Dr. Thinkwell was debating in his own mind whether he had not done wrong by refusing at once to go up and unite with this little company, as the true Church of Christ; but while he could see at a glance that it had *most* of the marks which in the Scriptures they had found to characterize a true Church, yet there were one or two which he could not at the moment, and with the information he then possessed, feel certain that it could certainly claim; but when he came to reflect, he found that these were such as *did not depend ENTIRELY upon the Scripture*, though they were scriptural marks, and it had been distinctly understood and expressed, when they were making up the tablet, that a true Church, though it must possess these marks, could be easily known without them. These were the last three tests, each of which requires some knowledge *of history* to make its application certain. He comforted himself, however, with the reflection that one month's delay would not probably be of very great consequence, and would give him the opportunity to make his investigation complete in every particular, and his decision, as a consequence, final, and subject to no annoying *doubts*; and doubts had thus far been the bane of his religious life—not doubts about his own acceptance in Christ, but *uncertainty* about what was *his duty* to believe and to perform.

TENTH DAY'S TRAVEL.

In which the Church is found and identified.

THE Presiding Elder owed his high standing and influence as much to his never-failing suavity of manner, his imperturbable good-humor, and the possession of a comfortable estate, as to his intellectual vigor or his extensive information. He had a ready mind, and could usually give a plausible reply to any argument that seemed to bear against the opinions he espoused; and it was not to him a matter of much moment whether others were satisfied with his reasoning or not. He cared very little, in fact, what opinions other people held: he had no conception that it was of any great consequence whether they or he were right or wrong. Indeed, he thought it doubtful whether *all* were not wrong. He was sure that there were inconsistencies and contradictions in his system, but yet he had never thought of abandoning the system; and as the more he examined it, the more its inconsistencies appeared, he would not earnestly and carefully look into it, but contented himself by defending those points which others assailed; and this he usually did by a resort to raillery and ridicule, rather than to sober reason and earnest logical argument.

As he had no hope of making a Methodist of any of the company with whom he met at Dr. Thinkwell's, he was not very much concerned about the result of their investigations,

and was prepared to hear, with equal indifference, that they had decided that any one or another of the *branches* of the Church was, in their estimation, the true *ekklesia* of Christ.

It was, therefore, a source of no annoyance to him, when they met at his house on Monday, to hear the Doctor say that he was *almost* convinced that he had at last discovered the object of his search, in the simple, unpretending body of Christian people with whom he met upon the Sabbath.

"I grant you," said the elder, "that if *your marks or tests* are reliable, the Baptist Church has more of them than any other; and I suppose, as the majority of your company are Baptists, you purposely framed them so that they might admit that organization, and exclude all others. I will not contend with you, or these friends, upon the applicability of your tests; but if I had been with you from the beginning, I would have objected to the tests themselves."

"There were those with us, sir, who did object to them. Nay, we ourselves at first objected to some of them, and we received and entered on our tablet not one until we had carefully examined the word of God in regard to it, and were compelled to admit that it was in strict accordance with the requirements of the Scriptures; and so, I think, you would have done had you been present.

"In the first place, we could not avoid conceding that the apostles must have known what Christ desired and intended concerning the institution which he called the Church; and that in every thing essential to its existence and its order, its constitution and its membership, they would conform the Churches which they founded to the model they had received from him."

"Certainly, sir, that is all self-evident."

"Then, sir, we could not help seeing that the Church of Christ *is, and must be now*, in its organization and membership, in its constituent materials, and in its constitutional

order, its permanent offices and ordinances—in short, in *all* that necessarily belongs to it *as a Church*, just such an institution as those which the apostles founded, and of which we have the accounts in the New Testament Scriptures.”

“I grant all that,” said the Rev. Mr. Stiptain. “I see that, so far, you stood upon solid ground. It is not worth while to question that which is self-evident. But, then, there are still two sources of error into which you may have fallen, and by which your conclusions may have been vitiated. You may, in the first place, have mistaken what was merely *accidental* and *temporary*, and, consequently, *unessential*, for what was designed to be perpetual, and always and everywhere the same. Then, in the second place, you may have *misapprehended* what were the *real characteristics of the apostolic Churches*.”

“We were conscious, sir, of both these dangers, and endeavored to guard against them with most scrupulous care. First, in regard to what was *really essential*, we determined that there could be no Church *without members*. Members were, therefore, *essential*. And as these members *must have a certain character*, there must be *something* that distinguishes them from other people who are not members. Therefore, we concluded that the *character of the membership* was another essential, at least in those particulars in which the first Church members invariably differed from those who were not Church members. Thus far, surely we were safe. Then it seemed to us self-evident, as it must have done to you, and every other man of common sense, that there could be no Church without some sort of *organization*. The members must be united upon some formal basis. The Church was a body—a community, a society. It was not only an assembly, but an *official* assembly, with certain duties to perform, certain privileges to enjoy, certain objects to accomplish; and this, of necessity, required some basis of organiza-

tion, or, in other words, some *written* or *unwritten constitution*. This constitution must determine the conditions of membership, the relations of the members to each other, and of each of the local societies to each of the other local societies and to all of them, and of each and all of them to Christ their head. Whatever the Master determined in regard to such matters as these must evidently be regarded as *perpetually essential*; for it is inconceivable that *human wisdom* should ever be able to mend that system by which the apostle says the *wisdom of God* was made manifest to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. You may take our tests now, one by one, and see if any one has reference to a matter that was not *essential* to the *being*, the *constitution*, or the *continuance* of the Church.

“Then, to guard against all danger from the *other* source which you indicate, namely, that we might have mistaken what *were* the real scriptural characteristics of the apostolic Churches in regard to these essential points, we took care first to exclude all the testimony of mere *tradition*, or even of history, and then all the assertions of even the most learned doctors, *as to what these characteristics were*, and regarded no one as established until we *had found it for OURSELVES* plainly and unmistakably recorded *in the word of inspiration*. What better could we possibly have done?”

“But, my dear sir, do you not admit that *you are fallible*, and that your friends are so; and, consequently, you and they *may have thought* you found in the Word things which really are not there?”

“Suppose that were the case. We must still trust to *our own* conclusions, and *act upon* our determinations; since God has made each one of us responsible for himself. Religion is a personal and individual thing. Every man must believe for *himself*, and decide for *himself*, and carry out in his religious obedience what he *himself* has found to be the will of God,

as revealed in his holy Word. The Word is addressed to *me*, and *I* must study it: *I* must endeavor to understand it for *myself*, and for *myself* I must obey; and if I fail, God will hold *me* individually and *personally* responsible. So that, unless I have so much more confidence in my pastor's judgment, or in the judgment of some other person, than I have in my own, that I am willing, uninquiringly, to risk my soul's eternal interest in his hands, I must be governed by *my own determination*.

"But, so far from deciding carelessly or inconsiderately, we have explored, with all the helps at our command, every inch of the ground, and are ready now, if it would not take up too much time, to point you to the chapter and verse in which each mark is designated in the Word."

"If you should do so," said the Presiding Elder, "we would be no nearer an agreement than we are now; for I should doubtless differ with you about the meaning of the passages, or should be disposed to point you to others teaching a very different doctrine."

"One would think, to hear you talk," replied the Doctor, "that it is impossible to know any thing certainly about what the Scriptures mean; but we have found them very plain, and all the time consistent with themselves, and feel that we may be as certain that they do contain these essential characteristics of a true Church of Christ, as we can be that they contain *any* system of doctrine or of duty. If they are ambiguous and double-tongued on this subject, it seems to me that men may as well at once despair of finding what they mean to teach on any subject; and as we have examined carefully and earnestly, and found the teaching plain and unmistakable, we must be governed by them, and consequently must abide by the result of the application of our *tablet*."

"I see, then, there is no room for argument against the Baptist Church, except on some two or three points."

"It is probably on those same points that I still have some lingering doubts. I saw at a glance, yesterday, that the Baptist Church with which I met consisted only of professed believers. There are none *born* into it, as Dr. Miller says they are into the Presbyterian Church. There are none *baptized* into it without their knowledge or consent, and without any previous confession of their faith, as infants are into the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Independent or Congregational Churches. It therefore has the *first* mark of our tablet. *Its members are all professed believers upon Christ.*

"It also has the *second*. Its members have all *been baptized upon a profession of their faith*; and as all denominations agree that immersion is baptism, there can be no doubt about this, arising from the nature of the act performed.

"So, also, it has the *third*. It is an independent, local organization, a complete Church in itself, and independent of all others."

"I do not know so well about that," said the Presiding Elder. "I was at a Baptist Association last summer, and for the life of me I could not see much difference between the relation which *it* sustained to the Churches, and that sustained by a presbytery or a conference. It is merely another name for a great ecclesiastical court. The Methodists have their quarterly conferences, their annual conferences, and their General Conference. The Presbyterians have their presbyteries, and their synods, and their General Assembly; and so the Baptists have their local associations and their general associations, and their great Convention, which, like our General Conference, only meets once in several years. The local Churches are no more independent in the one denomination than in the other. In all they are under the control of the assembled delegates, which represent the combined wisdom of all the Churches."

This was a new phase of the subject to the Doctor, and he knew not what to say, but turned inquiringly to Mr. Courtney.

"A Baptist Church," said the schoolmaster, "is, in all that concerns its own members, as independent of the associations as it is of the Methodist conference, or of the grand lodge of Odd-Fellows. When a candidate applies for admission, *it* alone decides to receive or reject him. When a member has been guilty of some offence, *it* tries, condemns, and excludes him, and from *its* decision there is no appeal to any association, local or general, or to any convention or other body outside itself. What it decides is the decision of *the Church*, and ends the matter, unless it can be persuaded to revoke its decision, as Paul besought the Church at Corinth to restore one whom it had cast out.

"The Church is under no necessity to belong to any association, and is neither more nor less a Church when she does belong to one. Every association and convention in the land may be dissolved to-morrow, and no single Baptist Church will have either more or less authority than she has to-day. But if you dissolve the Conference, that great ecclesiastical establishment called the Methodist *Church* is dissolved. Dissolve the General Assembly, and you have dissolved that great confederation known as the Presbyterian *Church*, and of which each local society is but an integral *part*. A Methodist society *cannot be* a Methodist society except as *a part* of the great body that is subordinate to the Conference. A Presbyterian society cannot be a real Presbyterian society except as it makes a part of that great body which is subject to the General Assembly. Let either withdraw all connection with or deny all obedience to the powers thus set over them, and they become Independents. But a Baptist Church is not of necessity a part of any association or convention. It gives up no part of its authority when it sends a messenger, and retains no more when it refuses or neglects to send "

"What then, let me ask, is the Association, and what relation *does* it sustain to the Churches and their members?"

"Some Baptist associations and conventions," replied Mr Courtney, "are organized for one purpose, and some for another. They are simply voluntary organizations outside the Churches, formed, like a Bible society, or a missionary society for the accomplishment of some specific object, in which the Churches may or may not take a part, as they see fit. Sometimes this object is to sustain a system of missionary operations so extensive that some concert of action is required to secure its success; sometimes it is to build up and sustain an institution of learning; sometimes to provide young ministers with the means of acquiring a better theological education; sometimes it is for the arrangement and support of some plan for the distribution of the Scriptures or of other religious books; sometimes merely for mutual counsel, and to learn, by messengers or letters, what progress each Church is making, what is the number and condition of her membership, and what she is doing to promote the cause of Christ; and sometime.. it combines several or all of these objects. But whatever objects it may have, it never can have the right to interfere with the domestic economy or discipline of the Churches, whether of those who send messengers to it or of others."

"But let me ask you," said the Presiding Elder, "whether these associations are not often called on to decide cases of difficulty in the discipline of the Churches, which are sent up to them for adjustment?"

"No, sir; the Churches often send up some notice of cases of difficulty and ask for *advice*, and sometimes they send questions of difficulty and ask for *information* concerning matters either of faith or practice, and the advice is given and the information granted; but neither the one nor the other

as binding as a law to the Churches. Each Church may receive or reject the advice, as it sees best."

"But may not the association punish the Church by exclusion, if it should fail to heed the advice so kindly given?"

"That would depend upon the relation of the matter to the constitution of that particular association. You will observe that each association is a *voluntary* organization. It makes no part of the Churches, and has no control over the Churches, except in regard to such matters as are provided for in the constitution adopted by itself, and voluntarily agreed to by the parties coming in. And no Church has the *right* to give up to the association any of those prerogatives with which Christ has invested her. She dare not give up to the association, or to the minister, or to anybody else, the *power of discipline*, which is by the authority of Christ vested in the *ekklesia* alone. The constitution of the association determines the conditions of membership in its own body: they are as various, almost, as the associations themselves. In some, for instance, no Church can be represented that does not send a certain sum of money; and if she fails to make the contribution, she cannot be a member of the association, but she is no less a Church, and a Baptist Church, than she would have been if she had sent it. In most of the associations, it is made a condition of membership that the Church must be an *orderly Baptist Church*, and must hold certain doctrines which are common to the denomination. This is essential for the harmonious mutual coöperation of them all in the educational or missionary enterprises for the conducting of which the association was formed. And when they have such a constitutional basis, and any Church has ceased to be an *orderly Baptist Church*, or to hold the doctrines specified, they may refuse to recognize her any longer as a member. But this is no *ecclesiastical*, no *Church* action. It is not an excommunication on the assumed authority of

Christ, and exercised by the association as *his Church*, or as a *part* or a *branch* of *his Church*; it is the mere dissolution of a voluntary compact, when one of the parties has violated the terms of the compact. *The authority of the association can never go behind its OWN CONSTITUTION.*

"It may be possible that associations sometimes forget this, and act as though they were not merely advisory, but legislative or judicial bodies; but if they ever do, they violate all regular Baptist usage, and thoughtful and intelligent Baptists will at once disown them.

"The truth is, the associations and conventions are the mere creatures of the Churches, formed for the more effectual execution of the plans which the Churches entertain for the furtherance of the great objects of Christian benevolence; objects so vast that individual Churches cannot alone accomplish them. What *one* cannot do, some twenty, or fifty, or a hundred can, and they agree to work together; and that they may work harmoniously together, each sends a delegate or more, as may be agreed upon, to carry funds, assist by his counsel, and bring back word to the Church as to how the work goes on. The association is not, therefore, like the Conference or the Presbytery, the *lord* and *master* of the Church, but is its *creature* and its *servant*, and so responsible to it for its proceedings, that if it does not conduct in all things in such a way as to give satisfaction, it *withdraws* from it and gives it no more countenance or support. But whatever the association may be, or whatever power it may have, it is sufficient for our present argument to know that every Baptist Church is so far independent of it, that it is entirely free to unite with it or to stand apart from it. It is no more bound to belong to an association or convention, than it is to represent itself in the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance, or to belong to the American Bible Society, or the American Sunday School Union."

"Then I can understand," resumed the Doctor, "that it has also the fourth mark upon our tablet. *It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.* If the associations and conventions cannot make laws for it, or exercise discipline for it or in it, I suppose no others will attempt to do so, unless it be their pastors; and I observed yesterday that the pastor took no other share in the exercise of discipline, than simply as the president of the assembly, to put the question and gather the voice of the members. And, moreover, as the pastor is not sent to them by bishops, conferences, or presbyters, but chosen by the Church, and holds his office at their pleasure, he must of necessity be the servant and not the master of the Church. He may rule, but his government must be founded in love, and his control such as the faithful performance of his duties as a good minister of Jesus could not fail to give him in any assembly of earnest-hearted, Christ-trusting, and Christ-loving people.

"And so, also, I can testify that *its members come voluntarily and ask for membership*, and are not brought by their parents and compelled to be initiated, even though they cry out against it as loudly as a little babe can cry.

"Nor do I see any reason to doubt that *it holds to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel as its articles of faith.* And I have never heard of any Baptist Churches being engaged in *persecution*, though all the histories of them that I have read are almost continuous records of the distress which they have endured from other so-called Christian Churches.

"I yield them, therefore, the possession of our *fifth* and *sixth*, and also our *eighth* mark; but now when I come to ask about the *seventh* and the *ninth*, I must wait for further information."

"And if you wait," said the Reverend Mr. Stintain, "until you have traced its continued existence down from the time

of Christ, or ascertained its regular succession in a line of Churches that never in any age became even temporarily *apostate*, you will wait till you have joined the Church above. I have not studied particularly the history of the Baptist Church; but I will venture to promise that if you will make out this regular succession for them, I will at least never laugh at them again as the modern progeny of the Munster men in Europe, and Roger Williams in America."

"It was our understanding, I believe, when we entered these historical marks upon our tablet," replied the Doctor, "that each of the bodies claiming to be Churches should be considered as having descended regularly from the apostles, unless the contrary should appear from their own records. We have seen for each of the others a historical origin in comparatively modern times. We know when the Lutheran, the English and American Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist Churches were first organized. We can trace them back to a certain point, and beyond that they had no separate existence. They were all merged in Rome, and only existed as component parts of the great Roman Catholic antichristian Hierarchy. We have traced this mother of them all back still farther, and found a time long after Christ or the apostles when there was not only no Roman Catholic Church, but *no such organization* as that afterwards became.

"Now, if we can do the same by the Baptist Church—if we can go back and find a time since Christ when it had no existence—we must concede that it has not this test. But unless this can be done, we must take it for granted, as we were ready to do in regard to the other claimants, ~~that~~ it has existed from the days of Christ and the apostles. We need not put it upon the Baptists to show the record of every age, and trace upon it the history of their Church."

"In the sense in which you employ the term," said Mr. Courtney, "there is not and never has been such a thing as

'the Baptist Church.' There cannot be. Each Baptist Church stands alone and independent of all other Baptist Churches. As the Church at Jerusalem, and the Church at Antioch, and the Churches of Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, were not combined together in any great *confederation* called the Church, but *each one* was *the Church*, in and of itself, and neither more nor less *the Church* for the existence of the others, so every particular Baptist Church that is organized upon the same model, having the same sort of members, the same organization, the same ordinances, and the same doctrines, is itself *the Church*. It is not a *confederation* of Baptist Churches nor a continued *succession* of Baptist Churches that is the Baptist Church; but every local, independent body of baptized believers, holding the doctrines of the gospel, and having the ordinances of the gospel, that now exists, or has at any time or in any place existed, is and was *the Baptist Church* in the only sense that there can be any such thing as the Baptist Church, or that there was any such thing as *the Church* in the days of the apostles. And now, with this understanding of the term, I am ready to take either plan to show our continuity from the time of Christ. I will prove, by the most unexceptional historical authority, by the concessions of our bitterest opponents and persecutors, that our Churches *have existed* in every age. Or I will undertake, as a shorter method of reaching the same conclusion, to show that there is no other history of their first beginning but that which we have in the New Testament itself. And if I can do either one or the other, it will be more than enough. Now, to settle the question at once, I will take it upon me to trace the Baptist Churches on the chart of history, either backwards or forwards. We may begin here to-day and trace them back to John in Jordan; or I will begin in Jordan and trace them downward till to-day. I anticipated this difficulty I knew that a true Church could be known without this test,

and would not have introduced it but at the suggestion of the Episcopal bishop; but since we have it, I will not shrink from its most rigid application. Try us as you will, and you will not find us wanting in any scriptural feature. I have here a brief sketch of dates and authorities, which I have arranged merely to assist my memory, and by its aid I will give you such testimony as cannot fail to satisfy any reasonable man that Churches have *all the time* existed, having every essential characteristic of the little assembly with which we met on yesterday. I do not say they were *called* Baptists, or even Anabaptists, which is an older name, as applied to the Churches; but names are nothing. It is the *thing*, and not the name, that we are looking for; and the *thing* is an official assembly of Christian people, having each of the marks which we have recognized as the characteristics of the Churches of Christ in the apostles' days. Their *names* have usually been given by their enemies, and do not designate their character. Their *names* have been changed for them in almost every century, but their peculiar *character* has been the same, and by *this*, not the name, we must discover and point them out upon the page of history."

"I think," said the Doctor, "I would a little prefer to begin at the present, and trace them backwards. Thus we did with the other claimants, and found them all to end in Rome, at the time of Luther's Reformation."

"Very good: this is a little past the middle of the nineteenth century. I suppose no one will question the existence of the Baptist Churches now, and since the year
 A. D 1700
 to 1800 eighteen hundred. Both in this country and in Europe, there are hundreds, nay, thousands of Churches, and hundreds of thousands of members.

"Nor will it be doubted that they existed in the eighteenth century. A letter, dated Philadelphia, August 12th, 1714, written by a Baptist minister, Mr. Able Morgan, to a friend

in England, will show their existence in this country at that time: 'We are now,' he says, 'nine Churches;' alluding to those in the vicinity of Philadelphia. 'In these Churches there are alone five hundred members, but greatly scattered,' etc. (*Crosby*, vol. i., p. 122.) And we will presently see that there were many of them long before this in the New England States. I suppose it will hardly be necessary to do more than to say that hundreds of our Churches existed from A. D. 1700 to 1800, in the British Empire, and on the Continent. Their history in that country is too recent and too well known to admit of cavil or denial. But when we enter the next age in our travels up this stream of time, there may possibly be need of reference to authorities. It was during this century that the first Baptists came to America. They were members of a Church of English Baptists in *Holland*, A. D. 1600 having by persecution been driven out of Eng- to 1700. land, and who came over here in 1620. Cotton Mather, the historian of the early colonists, says of them, 'Having done with the *Quakers*, let it not be misinterpreted if into the same chapter we put the inconveniences which the New England Churches have suffered from the *Anabaptists*, albeit they have infinitely more of Christianity among them than the *Quakers*. . . . Infant baptism hath been scrupled by multitudes in our days, who have been in other points most worthy Christians, and as holy, watchful, fruitful, and heavenly people as, perhaps, any in the world. *Some few of these* people have been among the planters in New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinion to themselves.'

"But at length it came to pass that while some of our Churches used, it may be, a little too much *cogency* toward the brethren which would weakly turn their backs when in-

sants were brought forth to be *baptized* in the congregation, there were some of these brethren, in a day of temptation, broke forth into schismatical practices that were justly offensive to all the Churches in this wilderness.'

"Our Anabaptists, when somewhat of exasperation was begun, formed a Church at Boston, on May 28th, 1665, besides one which they had *before* at Swanzev. Now they declared our infant baptism to be a mere nullity, and they arrogate unto themselves the title of *Baptists*, as if none were baptized but themselves.'

"In another place, Mr. Mather says that more than a score of *ministers* had come to the country who were so obnoxious to the body of the colonists that they could not be tolerated, but that some of them were deserving of a place in his book for their piety. 'Of these there were some godly *Anabaptists*,' whom he mentions by name. (*Crosby*, vol. i., pp 112-116.)

"The existence of our Churches in England, during this century, is attested by several books which were published by their ministers. One in 1615, to prove that every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion, and show the invalidity of the commonly received baptism; and for their opinions on several points of doctrine they refer to their Confession of Faith, published in 1611. They published another book defending Baptist sentiments, in 1618, and many from that time on. But they have not only given this testimony concerning themselves, but we can trace them in the laws enacted for their destruction, in their *petitions* and *complaints*, in the records of the *courts* and the *prisons* in which they were condemned and confined; and one of them, at least, was *burned at the stake*. It was about the middle of this century, moreover, that Cromwell made religion free, and thousands of Baptists came forth into the light, who before

had been obliged to hide from the sword of persecution 'Persons of this persuasion,' says Russell, 'filled the army with preaching, and praying, and valiant men.' When Cromwell afterward, under the influence of Presbyterians, determined to repress the Baptists, they sent him a memorial or remonstrance, in which they ask 'if Baptists have not filled his towns, cities, provinces, islands, castles, navies, tents, armies, and court.' But under Charles the Second, they were again subject to persecution, but still continued to protect against the Hierarchy, and the other corruptions of Christianity.

"Now let us go back another century. We have found Baptists in great numbers from 1600 to A D 1500
1700. How is it from 1500 to 1600? to 1600.

"The Baptists in the early part of this century were for the most part called *Lollards* in England, and Anabaptists and *Mennonites* upon the Continent. But they were *Baptists* in fact, though known by other names. They were in England many of them foreigners who had been led to expect, from the rupture between King Henry the Eighth and the Pope, that they might there be free to enjoy their religion; a mistake of which King Henry hastened to cure them, as soon as he became the *Head* of the Church.

"Styrpe, the historian of those times, says, 'The Baptists pestered the Church, and would openly dispute their principles in public places. In 1539, a general pardon was granted to all religious offenders, but the *Baptists* were specially exempted. So numerous were they, and so rigorously persecuted, that the records show that *over seventy thousand* of them were, in King Henry's time, punished by fines, by imprisonment, by banishment, or by burning.

"On the Continent, their existence is shown by the persecutions which they suffered from the Lutherans, as we have already seen.

A. D. 1400 "Then let us go back another hundred years
to 1500. How was it from 1400 to 1500? We have now, you see, gone back of the times of the *Reformation*, which occupied the early part of the century we have just past. We are now where we can find no Church of England, no Lutheran, no Presbyterian Churches. The Protestants had at this time not yet protested, and were quietly resting in the polluted arms of their mother of Rome.

"Now if we still find the Baptists outside of Rome, refusing to recognize her as a Christian Church, denouncing her as the very Antichrist foretold in the Word, and by her denounced and *persecuted*, we will have proved, at least, this much, that the Baptist Churches are older than *Protestantism* in any of its sects or creeds, and that they did not, as charged by Dr. Featly, and reiterated by almost every Pedobaptist writer since his day, begin with the madmen of Munster."

"Why do you not go back at once to Peter Bruis and his co-laborer Henry?" asked the Rev. Mr. Stiptain. "Dr. Wall, you know, admits that *they* were Baptists, and expressly says, 'they were the *first* preachers that ever set up a *Church* or society holding that infant baptism was a nullity, and rebaptizing such as had been baptized in infancy.'"

"I thank you for your suggestion, sir, though this will take us back at one step for over two hundred and fifty years. But in all those two hundred and fifty years the followers of Peter and Henry can be traced as *Baptists*, and their societies as *Baptist Churches*. It was some years before 1150 that they appeared. We learn their doctrines from their enemies. One who wrote against them, the Catholic Abbot of Clugny, says that they taught that 'infants are not baptized or saved by the faith of another, but ought to be baptized and saved by their own faith; or that baptism without their own faith does not save, and that those that are baptized in infancy, when grown up should be bap-

A. D. 1150
to 1500.

tized again, nor are they then rebaptized, but rather rightly baptized.' (Magdeburg Centuriators, Cent. xiii. c. 5, p. 332. *Ivimey*, vol. i., p. 22.) The Lateran Council, under Pope Innocent the Second, in 1139, according to Dr. Wall, did condemn Peter Bruis and his follower Arnold of Bresica, for rejecting infant baptism. The followers of these men were called Petrobrussians, Henricans, and Arnoldists, and a portion of them, at a later day, *Lollards*, from one Lollardo, who brought their doctrine into England. They and those who held the same doctrines, namely, the Paternines and Puritans, or Cathari, from the Province of Bulgaria, spread over the south of Europe, and, notwithstanding all the terrific persecutions to which they were subjected, maintained their separate societies even in parts of Italy. They owned the Scriptures for their only rule of faith and practice, administered baptism only to professed believers, and that by one immersion. See *Orchard's History of Foreign Baptists*, p. 160.

"It is stated by the learned Magdeburg Centuriators, and by Wall, that the followers of Peter Bruis, and of Henry, were about eight hundred thousand strong when Waldo, of Lyons, appeared and joined them, a few years after their condemnation by the Roman Catholic Council. He became a great leader among them, and thence, some say, they were called Waldenses, or Lyonists. Before the close of this century they had become a mighty host, and embraced among them persons of rank and power. In France, where they were strongest, they were called Albigenses. The ordinary means for the extirpation of the heresy not availing for their destruction, Pope Innocent the Third determined to bring to bear upon them all the military power of his dominions. He raised an army of from three to five hundred thousand men, and sent for their destruction. Two hundred thousand fell in one short campaign in the year 1209. Another army was sent the coming year: cities and towns were

burned, the country desolated, and every man, woman, and child that could be found, destroyed or banished. This was repeated year by year until the death of Innocent in 1216, and the same sanguinary course was followed up by his successor until about 1229, when the heretics had been so completely crushed that scarcely any could be found to glut the Roman thirst for blood. A great multitude had, however, escaped to other lands and carried the true gospel with them. They gathered in Switzerland and Germany, and among the valleys of the Pyrenees; and after all the wicked waste of life for the quarter of a century, it is conceded that there still remained at least *eight hundred thousand* of these persecuted people, concealed in various countries of Europe. (*Perin.*)”

“But is it certain,” asked Theodosia, “that these Albigenes were Baptists?”

“It was for denying infant baptism and the sacraments of the Roman Catholic hierarchy,” replied Mr. Courtney, “that they were condemned. Their own confessions of faith, the accusations of their enemies, and the concurrent testimony of historians, all unite in showing that they were Baptist Churches. See *Orchard's History of the Foreign Baptists* pp. 226-229.

“The same people in England were called Lollards, from the eminent Walter Lollardo, who left his native land to preach this gospel to the British; but the doctrines had gone there before him. Archbishop Lanfranc wrote a book against them shortly after the doctrine was condemned by the Lateran Council in 1139. About this time Lingard says a colony of people came into England belonging to the fanatics who invested the north of Italy, Gaul, and Germany, and who were called Puritans. Usher calls them Waldenses. They said they were Christians, and followed the doctrines of the apostles: they denied purgatory, prayers for the dead, and invocations to the saints. It was from these people that

Wyckliffe first, and Tyndale afterwards, were indoctrinated in the truth. History records the death of thousands of them up to the very time of the Reformation, as it is called, under Henry the Eighth, though by that time their name had been changed to Anabaptists.

“We might trace the same people in Bohemia, in Poland, in Moravia, and elsewhere; but it is not needful for our purpose. We have seen that, according to the testimony of Dr Wall, there were Baptist Churches from 1139 or before, when Peter Bruis and Henry set them up. Wall says they were the *first*, but I will show you now that Wall was mistaken. These men laid no claim to the *originating* of a system. They but embraced and preached doctrines already known, and united with a people who were already in being, and *had long been persecuted* for the maintaining of the *very same doctrines and practices*. If we will go back to the time of Pope Stephen the Second, about 750, we will find in history numerous accounts of a people called *Paternines*, who denounced infant baptism, and maintained that a Church should consist only of Christian people, and must not persecute, and who baptized by immersion, as indeed *all parties* did at that time. (See *Robinson's History of Baptists*, pp. 428–430.) They were called Paternines from the patience with which they suffered for the cause of Christ. In 1040 they had become very numerous. Their principal city was Milan. They had no connection with the Church of Rome. They rejected the authority of the *Fathers*. They said the sign of the cross was *the mark of the Beast*. Their Churches were numerous all over Europe, their meetings being held during times of persecution in the residences of the brethren, and it was to these people that Peter Bruis, and Henry, and Arnold of Bresica joined themselves, and gave their learning; and their eloquence to advance their cause. They, indeed, became so conspicuous among

A. D. 750

to 1150.

them that portions of their communities were called by their names; but though they were the means of giving their *new names*, they did not give them *new doctrines*. They left the Church of Rome, and joined these people who were never in the Church.

"But the Paternines were no *new sect*. They had simply been *new named*, for they belonged to the people who were before called *Paulicians*, or *Publicans*, and who began about the year 650, and who are well known to the history of those times. Robinson says they *rebaptized* those who came to them by *immersion*. Mosheim says they *rejected the baptism of infants*, and Dr. Allix calls them *Anabaptists*. Because they had no rulers and condemned the hierarchy, they were sometimes called the *Acephali*, from a Greek word signifying the *Headless*. So numerous were these people, that even after portions of them had come to be called Paternines and by other names, one hundred thousand martyrs of them died in nine years by the most horrid tortures, during the reign of that female devil incarnate, the Empress Theodora."

"I am glad," said Mrs. Percy, "that her name was not Theodosia."

"From Italy," continued Mr. Courtney, "the *Paulicians* sent colonies, according to the testimony of Mosheim, and Gibbon, and others, into almost every nation of Europe, and formed a number of religious assemblies, who adhered to their doctrine, and who suffered every conceivable indignity from the Church of Rome. In Italy they were called Paternines, or Puritans; ('*Paterni*,' or '*Cathari*,' from a Greek word signifying the pure;) in France *Bulgarians*, because they came from Bulgaria, and sometimes Publicans and *Boni Homines*, or the Good Men. But they were mainly known as the *Albigenses*, from *Alby*, the name of a chief town in the region where they dwelt

‘ But though the Paulicians were *called* a new sect, and did have in one sense an independent origin, from one Constantine, who was afterwards called Sylvanus, and who was converted to Christ by reading the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, which were brought to him out of Syria by a deacon of a Christian Church, and after his conversion became a noted preacher of the truth, until he was, at the instigation of the Greek Church, stoned to death; yet his doctrine was not new, and *before his day and after it*, there were thousands who, like him, rejected infant baptism and the authority of the hierarchy, and were in all essential particulars Baptist Churches of Christ.

“ For if we now go back to the year 300, we will find *all* the Churches to be Baptist Churches in regard to *baptism*, except a few in Africa, though many of them had become apostate in regard to the *episcopacy*. A. D. 300
to 650

“ The accession of Constantine to the imperial throne in 306 has commonly been regarded as a blessing to Christianity. It was, in fact, so far as human wisdom can discover, its greatest curse. It degraded and polluted the Church by combining it with the state, and it made that thing which people have ever since called *the Church*, the murderer and persecutor of the followers of Christ. It was a matter of policy in Constantine to profess the Christian faith. He did it to cement his worldly power. He was no friend to Jesus. He had never learned of him how to be meek and lowly. He knew nothing of the humble and forgiving and long-suffering spirit of the true disciples of Jesus. Like Henry the Eighth of England, his ambition was to become the *HEAD of the Church*; and as its head, so soon as his ecclesiastical power was firmly established, he adjusted his creed and issued his edicts of conformity. His clergy were notoriously corrupt, and the people who would not submit to their rule were most

grievously oppressed, yet they continued to ask, '*What has the Emperor to do with our religion?*' The councils of prelates by imperial authority strove in vain to bring into subjection the *Cathari*, the Novationists, and the *Ærians*, (not *Arians*,) who opposed their doctrines and rejected their authority, and continued to baptize anew all who came from their apostate communion. For they regarded the so-called Catholic Church, now claiming all the power of Christ's kingdom, but as a *worldly* community, while *Christ's Church* must, they said, consist only of the *converted*. There was not at the beginning of this period in the Eastern Churches any question concerning *baptism*, for all parties *immersed*, and we have no record of the baptism of a *child* until 370, when the *son of the Emperor Valens* was thought to be dying, and was baptized by command of the emperor. Nor is there any official requisition for the baptism of children until the decree of the Council of Carthage in 401. But we have nothing to do with *this establishment*, world-wide as it was, which recognized the emperor for its head. By that one act, if in no other way, it had *apostatized* from Christ. We must look for the Baptist Churches among those who would not even on pain of death yield to its usurped authority, who would not obey its decrees, and who held on to the liberty with which Christ had made them free. We have nothing to do with the so-called Arian heresy, or its Trinitarian opponents. The apostate Church of the *emperor* may fight its own battles—they do not concern the Churches of Christ. These *never came into the ecclesiastical establishment called the Church* by those who write Church history. *That establishment* was mostly made up of those who had apostatized before Constantine entered it and was elevated to its headship. They had already recognized the authority of bishops and councils to make laws for them. They had already become *worldly* and *corrupt*, and there were those who had long refused com-

union with them on this account. They said to any who came to join them, 'If you be a virtuous believer, and will concede to our confederacy against sin, you may be admitted among us by baptism, or, if any Catholic has baptized you before, by rebaptism.' It was on this account that they were at a later day called *Ana-Baptists*, or rebaptizers. They soon obtained the name of *Cathari*, or Puritans, because they thus insisted on maintaining the *purity* of their communion. There is mention made of these people in France fifty years before the time of Constantine. Their Churches were scattered all over the Roman empire when Constantine came to the throne. Constantine sought to unite them with the Catholics, but they obstinately refused to pollute their communion even at the command of the emperor, who then professed to be their friend. He therefore turned against them, destroyed their books, drove them out of their Churches, and, by his oppressive measures, *scattered* them as precious seed among those countries in the west of Europe where they afterwards produced those trees of righteousness, the Paterines, Albigenses, Waldenses, and others of the same faith and order, though called by various names. Claudius Seysell, the *popish* archbishop, *traces the rise of the WALDENSIAN HERESY to a pastor named Leo leaving Rome at this early period*, and taking up his abode in the valleys.

"The succeeding emperors continued the persecution which Constantine began. In 375, the Puritan ministers were banished by Valens; but Theodosius, a few years after, restored their liberties, and showed them so much favor, that at the close of this century they had several Churches in Constantinople itself, under the very eye of his imperial majesty.

"In 412, however, their Churches were closed again, and by a decree of the Lateran council, in 413, they were banished as heretics, and the emperor doomed all who should *rebaptize* or be *rebaptized*, to death. Under this law, so like to that

of the Lutheran senate, in 1522, many were slain, and others driven into the valleys of Piedmont, where they were afterwards called Waldenses. Another council, at Mela, in 416, held them *accursed*, as denying that infant baptism conferred forgiveness and salvation, and two years after, the curse was repeated by a council at Carthage. These persecutions drove them into retirement, and from the patience with which they endured it, caused them to be called Paternines, and under this name we have already traced them. The accounts given of them by Eusebius and by Socrates, the historians of the early Churches, enables us easily to identify them, even after their name was changed.

A. D 30 “Now, to complete our chain, we have only to go back to the time when Jesus began to be about thirty years old, and bring down our history to the year 300. John at that time had prepared or was preparing a people made ready for the Lord. He rejected all who did not give evidence of true repentance, and profess their faith in him who was to come. After Jesus had been baptized by him he, by his disciples, continued to baptize. Out of these a Church was formed, as the model for others. The apostles formed many like it in various places. We have already examined them, and found that they were Baptist Churches, with every single mark included in our tablet. Such Churches as these would, of course, succeed them for a time. We have already ascertained that neither infant baptism nor the rule of prelatical bishops was recognized among them for many years; and that when they were sought to be introduced, there were some at least, whose history we have traced, who would accept of neither. All the so-called Christian Churches, for the *most part*, were separate and independent organizations for the first three hundred years; the exceptions being, as we have seen in our examination of episcopacy, in the cities where the hierarchy first began by the recognized supremacy of the

pastor of the first or principle Church. Infant baptism, we have seen, was not so much as mentioned till the time of Tertullian, and then promptly rejected; nor have we any record of the baptism of any infant till after Church and State were joined. In those early days *all* baptized by *immersion*, as all historians concede; so that we have no possible room to doubt that from Christ to the separation of the Puritans or Novationists, the great multitude of the Churches were independent local societies, consisting of professed believers who had been baptized by immersion upon a profession of their faith, and of course had voluntarily united with them; and that almost all these societies rejected the authority, in matters of religion, of all lawgivers but Christ, and were, in fact, just such communities as the Baptist Churches are now."

"Your succession is very ingeniously made out," said the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "and it seems a pity to sever such a beautiful chain, and let all fall that hangs upon it; but the truth of history requires it; and much as I regret the ruin in which it must involve your whole scheme, I must call your attention to *one very important fact*, which you, undesignedly no doubt, forgot to mention."

"And what is that, pray?"

"It is, simply, that *the Waldenses were not Baptists*, but, like the Methodists and Presbyterians, baptized their infant children."

"That would not, even if it were true," said Mr. Courtney, "sever the chain of our succession; for I have shown that the *first* Churches, for two hundred and fifty years, did not baptize infants, and were in other things like Baptist Churches. Then I have shown that similar Churches, disowning the hierarchies and denying all baptisms but that administered by themselves to professed believers, called Novationists and Cathari at first, and Paternines afterwards, continued to exist down to the time of Peter, and Henry, and Arnold, and that

they afterwards became so numerous under the name of *Albigenses* as to require immense armies, year after year, for near a quarter of a century, to extirpate them in France alone. These Albigenses, I have shown, were Baptists; and it was by one of these that their doctrines were brought into England. The Lollards were descendants of *these* people, and the Lollards continued to be drowned and burnt in England for denying infant baptism and the hierarchy, up to the time of the Reformation, and were in all respects similar to these ancient Baptist Churches. If those upon the continent ever apostatized, and fell into the baptism of infants, it was *not till after they had sent believers' baptism into England*, and any defection *afterwards* would not affect our cause.

"Let it be true that *some* of the people called Waldenses by others, or even by themselves, did baptize infants; it is enough for us that there were others of them who, as Dr. Wall says of the Petrobrussians, whom he counts as a sect of the Waldenses, 'did reckon infant baptism as one of the corruptions of the Church of Rome, and accordingly renounced it, and preached only adult baptism.' (Hist. Inf. Bap., part ii., chap. 7, §§ 5, 6, 7.) Mosheim says of Peter Bruis, that 'it is certain that one of his tenets was, that no persons whatever were to be baptized before they were come to the full use of reason.'

"Brandt, in his History of the Reformation, says that '*some* of the Waldenses rejected infant baptism;' and this is certain from the testimony of those who *killed them because they did deny infant baptism*. Now if there were *some* of them who were Baptists, and Lollardo was of these, as he must have been, since those whom he instructed in England were afterwards killed for entertaining Baptist sentiments, it does not matter if many others of them were degenerate.

"But besides this, we have traced the Baptists of England *only* through this *one* channel: we could trace them *with equal*

ease through the Mennonites, and these we can trace back to the times of the apostles by a channel which has no suspicion of infant baptism. Then we have not yet examined the history of the *original* baptism which is said to have been brought into England by Paul himself, and which certainly was introduced at a very early day, and before the corruptions which made the Eastern Churches apostate.

"But merely for your satisfaction, I will show you that you have been imposed upon when you were taught to believe that the main body of the so-called Waldensian Christians baptized their infants, or were in any thing other than true Baptist Churches according to our tablet."

"I do not know," replied the Presiding Elder, "how that can be, when we have their own express declaration in their official Confession of Faith."

"In a body of people so numerous as the Waldenses," said Mr. Courtney, "comprising not only many separate communities, but extending over different countries, and speaking various different languages, we may well suppose some diversity of faith and practice; and if some *one* of these communities should for themselves have stated that they believed and practiced infant baptism, it would not follow that all the Waldenses did so. But I doubt if you can show any such concession."

"Most certainly I can, sir. It is in the confession entitled 'A Confession of Faith of the Waldensian Brethren,' and is addressed to King Uladislaus, in Hungary, presented in 1508; and which has been so often quoted and referred to, that I wonder how a gentleman of your intelligence upon these subjects could be ignorant of it."

"I am not ignorant of the existence of the document you refer to; but I do not believe that it was ever made by *Waldenses*. It was made, probably, by some of the followers of *Huss*, commonly called *Calixtines*."

"But why do you not believe they were Waldenses?"

"Simply because. in the first place, *the document itself declares that they WERE NOT.* It *begins* by informing the king that '*they were not Waldenses, though by their enemies they were called Waldenses, and persecuted as such.*' Now, the *real* Waldenses were not very likely to be *ashamed of their name*, nor to deny it, even to shun persecution and death. In the second place, there is a real Waldensian confession, of a later date, which is in direct opposition to this. In this which you refer to, and which is *called* theirs, they are made to say that '*children, by an apostolic canon, as Dionysius writes, ought to be baptized;*' but in the later, and real one, they say, '*By this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing our faith and change of life;*' and not a word is there about the infants (*Jones's Ch. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 59, 60. *Orchard's Hist. F. B.*, p. 278.) But even allowing it to have been made by true Waldenses, it is evident they must have *changed* their sentiments and practice; as nothing can be more certain than that *at one time* they were destroyed as pestilent *Anabaptists.*"

"But did they not readily unite with Luther and Calvin, and become incorporated into their Churches?"

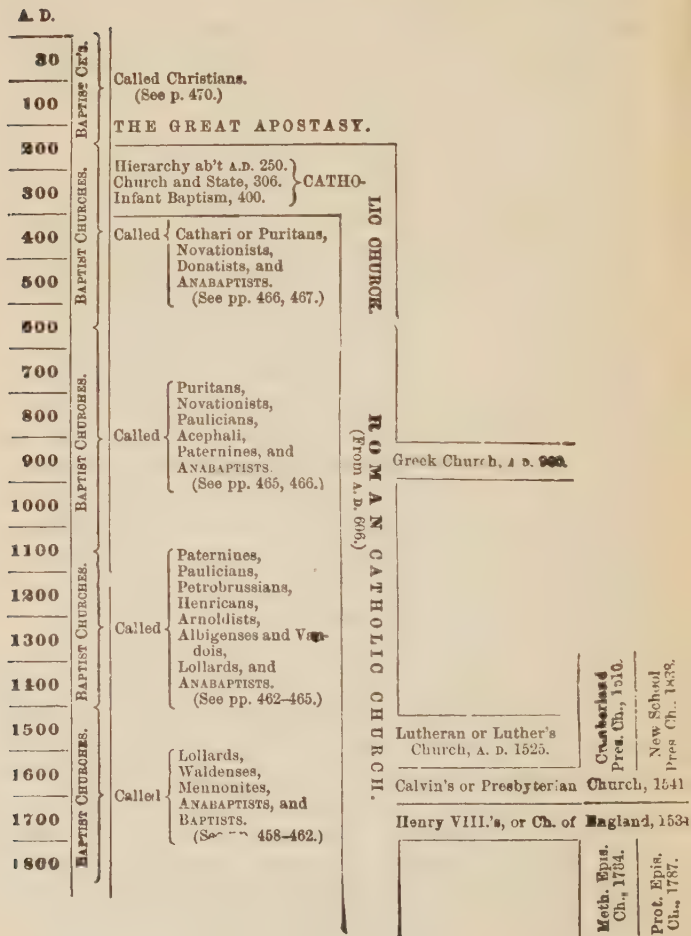
"It is certain," replied the schoolmaster, "that *many of them* did. They were not *all* prepared to suffer death for their religion, either at the hands of Luther or the pope; and large bodies of them came over to Luther, and more still to Calvin; yet so many remained faithful, that Mosheim says '*prodigious numbers of them were devoted to death in its most dreadful forms.*' '*In almost all the countries of Europe an unspeakable number of Baptists preferred death in its worst forms to a retraction of their sentiments.*' '*They suffered death,*' says the same author, '*not on account of their being considered rebellious subjects. but merely because they were judged to be incurable heretics;* for, in this century,

[the sixteenth,] the error or limiting the administration of baptism to adult persons only, and the practice of rebaptizing such as had received the sacrament in infancy, were looked upon as the most flagitious and intolerable of heresies. Those who had no other marks of peculiarity than their administering baptism to the adult, and their excluding the unrighteous from the external communion of the Church, ought to have met with milder treatment.'

"But now let us suppose, for a moment, that all the Waldenses had from the first been Pedobaptists; then it would follow of necessity that there were some *other people* who had existed and been persecuted all the time as Anabaptists; for Cardinal Hosius, the Roman Catholic president of the Council of Trent, expressly recognizes the existence of *some* such people, and his authority in the matter is unquestionable:

If the truth of religion were to be judged of by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinions and persuasions of no sect can be truer or surer than those of the *Anabaptists*; since there have been none, for these *twelve hundred years* past, that have been more grievously punished.' This was in 1570, and twelve hundred years back carries us to the *very year* in which the *first infant baptism* is recorded. And Mosheim says, 'that when the Mennonites [or Dutch Baptists] assert that they are the descendants of the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and other ancient sects, who are usually considered the *witnesses of the truth* in the times of universal darkness, they are not entirely mistaken; for, before Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe many persons who adhered tenaciously to the doctrines of the Dutch Baptists. Some of the followers of Menno, who had collected and reorganized the ancient Waldensian Baptists, settled in Holland. After the Reformation in England, some who embraced Baptist sentiments, but had among them no one whom they con-

DIAGRAM OF CHURCH HISTORY



EXPLANATION OF THE DIAGRAM

THE period which has elapsed since his Church was organized by the Lord Jesus shortly after A. D. 30 down to the present time, we have divided into FIVE *great historical periods*, as indicated by the braces (—) in the left-hand column, which represent the succession of the Baptist Churches.

The 1st of these periods, it will be seen, extends from the year 30 to 250, during which time almost *all* the Churches had the marks required by our tablet. The figures after pp. refer to the pages of this work in which their history is briefly recorded.

The 2d period extends from 250 to 650. P. 466.

The 3d from 650 to 1150. P. 465

The 4th from 1150 to 1500. P. 462.

The 5th from 1500 to the present time. P. 458.

In each of these periods we have distinctly, though very briefly, shown the existence of the genuine and true Christian Church, conforming in all things to the Scripture pattern, and called by the names indicated in the Diagram. If our space would permit, we could make their history much more complete. Our object is merely to prove their *existence*.

The GREAT APOSTASY, foretold in the Scripture as the Mystery of Iniquity, the Man of Sin and the Son of Perdition, and Antichrist, is represented by the lines that go off at right-angles from the year 250 to 400. This Apostasy was of gradual growth, and was mainly characterized by the substitution of the Hierarchy, or the rule of the bishops and councils, for the independence of the Churches, by the union of Church and State under Constantine, and the introduction of unauthorized members by the baptism of infants, or rather of *minors*. It claimed to be the Holy Catholic or *Universal* Church, and from the first became a *bloody persecutor* of those in the left-hand column.

A little after 1500 it gave off, during what was called the Reformation, the bodies which were organized respectively by Luther, Calvin, and King Henry VIII., since known as the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Church of England. These have each given off several others, only a few of which are indicated on the Diagram, with the dates of their organization.

sidered as authorized to baptize, sent to Holland one of their number to be baptized and qualified; and thus true baptism came into England again from *these Mennonite Churches*. And it was from *these Churches*, and not directly from England, that the first Baptists came to this country and formed the Churches at Swansey and Boston, as we have seen.

"It does not follow that because some in England sent to these ancient Churches for their baptism, they might not have found it nearer home. There is, to say the least, a *very strong probability* that the original, pure Christianity brought into England in the apostles' days was never *quite* extinguished, but that true Churches have existed, at least in Wales, from the very first; and it is certain the Lollards found a lodging there. In this country we have had ministers from England and Wales, and from Germany and Holland, *all* bringing with them the baptism which came down from the ancient Churches."

"I think," said Mr. Percy, "I could make this matter plainer by means of a diagram, or chart, which will bring the prominent facts before the eye at one view. Thus, let the straight lines upon the left of the page show the succession of true Churches, and those on the right the several departures from them, while on the margin we may put the dates of each important change."

(See Diagram of Church History, on page 476.)

"Now, if you, or any one else, should feel dissatisfied with this brief but comprehensive history of the Baptist Churches, let me commend to your reading, Jones's Church History, Robinson's History of Baptism, De Anvers' History of the Baptists, Ivimey's History of English Baptists, Crosby's History of the English Baptists, and last, and best of all, because they contain the essence of their statements in a smaller compass, those monuments of historical industry, Orchard's History of the Foreign Baptists, and Orchard's History of the Eng

lish Baptists. These works are the result of *thirty years* of careful and earnest study by one who had opportunities which very few possess of learning all that can now be known concerning these so long despised and persecuted people; and it is hard to say whether he deserves more credit for what he has written than for what he has left out. For if he had recorded all, his work would have been too large for many to read, or any to remember; but, with most admirable judgment, he has selected what was of most importance, and has arranged it with so much skill, and authenticated every statement by such abundant references to the most unexceptionable authorities, that it will be difficult for any candid mind, after reading these two works, to doubt that there have been Baptists all the time, from the day that Jesus was baptized (*eis*) into the river of Jordan, as recorded by Mark, in the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, down to the present time.

"Now, as the present Baptists hold the same doctrines, have the same organization, the same officers, and the same ordinances with the *first* Churches, and as we have traced such all the way, independent of the great apostasy, we may give them the last mark also. And therefore Mr. Percy may now finish his diagram of the Baptist Churches."

"I do not know so well about that," said Theodosia, smiling. "I well remember when my husband, for a little time at least, had very serious doubts as to whether these were true Churches of Christ, upon a ground very different from any you have mentioned. He will recollect that one of his friends almost persuaded him that *those* could not be the Churches of Jesus Christ which starved his ministers, or, what is the same thing to the Churches, compelled them to forsake their sacred calling and engage in other labors for their subsistence."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Percy, "I do remember it; and

DIAGRAM OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES

MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.		MARKS OF A BAPTIST CHURCH
<p>1st.</p> <p>It consists only of professed believers in Christ.</p>		<p>It consists of those only who have publicly professed their faith in Christ.</p>
<p>2d.</p> <p>Its members have been baptized upon a profession of their faith.</p>		<p>After public profession of their faith they are immersed, and so baptized.</p>
<p>3d.</p> <p>It is a local organization, and independent of all others.</p>		<p>Each Church is like those formed by the apostles, independent of all others.</p>
<p>4th.</p> <p>It has Christ alone for its King and Lawgiver, and recognizes no authority but his above its own.</p>		<p>No priests, bishops, or confederacy can give laws to it, or control its discipline. It calls none on earth its master.</p>
<p>5th.</p> <p>Its members have become such by their own voluntary act.</p>		<p>Its members were not brought in by others in their infancy, but came in of their own desire.</p>
<p>6th.</p> <p>It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.</p>		<p>It holds as articles of faith the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.</p>
<p>7th.</p> <p>It began with Christ, and has continued to the present time.</p>		<p>The apostolic Churches were Baptist Churches, and just such have been continued, even until now. See Historic Chart, p. 477.</p>
<p>8th.</p> <p>It never persecutes for conscience' sake.</p>		<p>It has in every age been the advocate of religious freedom; has asked it for others as well as itself; and though always persecuted, never persecutes.</p>
<p>9th.</p> <p>No apostate Church can be a true Church of Christ.</p>		<p>It has not apostatized, nor has it ever been connected with the great apostasy.</p>

though, for *my own part*, I have found nothing to complain of, yet, to this day, I cannot help feeling a sort of doubt as to any Church which I find pursuing this suicidal and ignoble policy. They may be right in doctrine, but they are surely very wrong in practice."

"If you will take the trouble to observe a little more carefully," replied Mr. Courtney, "you will find that whenever and wherever a minister has had the *faith* and courage to risk all and give himself *entirely* to his proper work, he has been provided for. The Lord does not intend that his ministers shall *get rich*; and when they leave their work to engage in money-making, he often blasts all their hopes, in various ways of his providence. But he does intend and has plainly and repeatedly *promised* that they shall *have enough* for the supply of their necessities; and this they will have *in the ministry*, if they will *devote themselves entirely to it*. I am ready to assure to any young man whom the Lord has qualified and called to preach, a comfortable support, provided he will give up all his powers of body and mind to the one work of his calling. I can do so because the Master has promised, and I can do so because I have been watching for years, and have not found his promise fail to any one who kept himself within the order of God's providence—that is, who was ready to go and labor wherever God by his providence seemed to call him. I could, for the encouragement of such, relate the personal history of several, the beginnings of whose ministerial life were most unpromising, but who had determined to know nothing but Christ, and do nothing but preach; and are now enjoying in a green old age as many comforts as their neighbors, who have made it the business of their lives to get rich. But while I say this, I know very well that our Churches are most shamefully negligent of their duty. They give nothing near what they should give for the support of the ministry; but for this there are two reasons besides the par-

simony of the brethren. I grant that this is one; and if it is not repented of, God will shortly take our candlestick away and leave our Churches to die out, as some Baptist Churches are already doing, and many others have done in the last thirty years. But I do not believe *this is the principal reason*. That is to be found in the *early history* of our Churches, when we were *taxed* to pay other preachers than our own, to preach another gospel which we did not believe. The people felt the injustice of such taxation; our ministers declaimed against it; and, to show that *they* were of a different class, that *they* did not care for the pay, so that they had their love and saved their souls, they took a pride in preaching without compensation, and Providence, as it *then* might have been their duty, enabled them to do it, and yet not to suffer. The people came gradually to think that what was thus done for a particular purpose, under peculiar circumstances, was something *required by the gospel*, and that ministers were *bound* to preach *without any regular provision* for their support. The ministers had only done as Paul did—waived their rights for the time being, that their gospel might not be reproached. Paul labored for his own support and that of those who were with him. Sometimes he would not be chargeable to the Churches for his support, but he was careful to maintain all the time that he had *a right* to it. He was careful to show that it was the express command of the Lord Jesus that ‘those who preached the gospel should live by the gospel;’ and that he and others might forbear working if they would. It is not unlikely our preachers might have been less careful in this particular, and so the people came to feel at length that preachers should have no regular support, and if any one claimed it they were disposed to class him with their oppressors, whom they counted but as wolves, seeking to devour their substance, or, at least, mere hirelings who labored *only* for the pay.

"Such opinions and feelings, deeply infused into a great mass of minds, would be eradicated but slowly, even by the most sedulous efforts of succeeding ministers. But here is the third reason: *These efforts have been wanting.* I blame our preachers more than our people for this state of things. They have pandered to this corruption in the Churches, instead of boldly reproofing it as they should."

"But, my dear sir, to have boldly reproofed it would have lost them the confidence and the affections of the flock, and prevented them from doing good in any other way."

"So perhaps it might if they had begun by complaints concerning *themselves*. I would not have a minister always grumbling about *his own support*. To do so will leave the impression that it is for the gratification of *his selfishness* that he seeks to cure others of being selfish. A wise man who understands human nature will adopt another and more successful plan. He will show the people that the Lord requires them to *give*, not to him, the preacher, but to the cause of Christ. He will present frequent opportunities to them for *giving* to others than himself. He will plead the cause of the destitute, and of the heathen. He will present the claims of missions, and of Bible societies, of Sunday-schools, and other objects of Christian benevolence, until they have acquired a *habit of giving*. He will explain the teachings of the Word concerning ministerial support, and thus preach the *whole* gospel, but without making any application of it to *his own case*. Let him do this, and his people will spontaneously begin to feel that they have done too little for their own pastor. Let *all* our ministers begin at once to preach thus *prudently* and kindly the *whole* gospel, and the Churches will soon show that the fault was less in them than in the preachers themselves that they have been apparently so parsimonious."

"I have already seen enough in my own experience," said Mr. Percy, "to convince me of the truth of what you say."

"I wish," said Dr. Thinkwell, "we could have finished this conversation last Saturday, so that I might have gone into the water with that young man who was yesterday baptized. My last lingering doubt is gone. I thank you all for the patience with which you have borne with my slowness of faith, and the readiness with which you have assisted my inquiries."

"We are more than repaid," said Mr. Percy, "by the happy result."

"And I," said the Reverend Mr. Stiptain, "am heartily glad that you have come to some conclusion. Of course I had rather you had determined to be a Methodist; but any branch of the Church is better than none. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him. I trust, sir, you will now enjoy that peace which arises only from a consciousness of doing your duty."

"I wish, my dear friend, I could persuade you to unite with me, and *do your duty also*."

"O, as to that, I have always enjoyed myself very well among the Methodists. You know I glory in the name, and among them I expect to live and die; but I acknowledge, after what I have learned of the Baptist Churches, I shall hereafter feel a *little* more respect for them than I have."

On their way back to the Doctor's residence, Theodosia reminded him that as they had now finished the investigation of the question, What is the Church? he was under promise to relate to her the means, or rather the arguments by which he was recovered from his infidelity and atheism, and led to receive the Scriptures as the word of God.

But as this conversation has no connection with the subject treated of in the present volume, we must postpone it for the

present,* and only inform the reader that Doctor Thinkwell was baptized into the little Church at their next regular meeting, much to the joy of all God's people there; and that our travelling party pursued their way to the mountains, where Mr. Percy's strength was soon so far restored that he felt that he must hasten back to his flock in the South, where he is still residing, preaching Jesus, beloved by his people, and admired by the world. Theodosia is indeed his helper in the Lord. Her influence is felt in every department of his work; nor does he preach less touchingly, or labor less hopefully, since the dear little boy came to amuse his hours of relaxation with its childish prattle. Mrs. Ernest and old Aunt Chloe are the assistants of Theodosia in her domestic labors, and all of them delight to show how much they love their Saviour and his Church.

* The reader will find it in the
Intolerant Daughter."

volume styled "The

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THE END.



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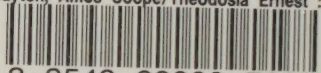
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